

# Dubrovsky

Alexander Pushkin



# CHAPTER I.

Some years ago, there lived on one of his estates a Russian gentleman of the old school named Kirila Petrovitch Troekouroff. His wealth, distinguished birth, and connections gave him great weight in the government where his property was situated. Completely spoiled by his surroundings, he was in the habit of giving way to every impulse of his passionate nature, to every caprice of his sufficiently narrow mind. The neighbours were ready to gratify his slightest whim; the government officials trembled at his name. Kirila Petrovitch accepted all these signs of servility as homage due to him. His house was always full of guests, ready to amuse his lordship's leisure, and to join his noisy and sometimes boisterous mirth. Nobody dared to refuse his invitations or, on certain days, omit to put in an appearance at the village of Pokrovskoe. Kirila Petrovitch was very hospitable, and in spite of the extraordinary vigour of his constitution, he suffered two or three times a week from surfeit, and became tipsy every evening.

Very few of the young women of his household escaped the amorous attentions of this old man of fifty. Moreover, in one of the wings of his house lived sixteen girls engaged in needlework. The windows of this wing were protected by wooden bars, the doors were kept locked, and the keys retained by Kirila Petrovitch. The young recluses at an appointed hour went into the garden for a walk under the surveillance of two old women. From time to time Kirila Petrovitch married some of them off, and new comers took their places. He treated his peasants and domestics in a severe and arbitrary fashion, in spite of which they were very devoted to him: they loved to boast of the wealth and influence of their master, and in their turn took many a liberty with their neighbours, trusting to his powerful protection.

The ordinary occupations of Troekouroff consisted in driving over his vast domains, passing his nights in prolonged revels, and playing practical jokes, specially invented from time to time, the victims being generally new acquaintances, though his old friends did not always escape, one only—Andrei Gavrilovitch Doubrovsky—excepted.

This Doubrovsky, a retired lieutenant of the Guards, was his nearest neighbour, and possessed seventy serfs. Troekouroff, haughty in his dealings with people of the highest rank, respected Doubrovsky, in spite of his humble fortune. They had been friends in the service, and Troekouroff knew from experience the impatience and decision of his character. The celebrated events of the year 1762<sup>[1]</sup> separated them for a long time. Troekouroff, a relative of the Princess Dashkoff,<sup>[2]</sup> received rapid promotion; Doubrovsky with his reduced fortune, was compelled to leave the service and settle down in the only village that remained to him. Kirila Petrovitch, hearing of this, offered him his protection but Doubrovsky thanked him and remained poor and independent. Some years later, Troekouroff, having obtained the rank of general, and retired to his estate, they met again and were delighted with each other. After that they saw each other every day, and Kirila Petrovitch, who had never deigned to visit anybody in his life, came quite as

a matter of course to the little house of his old comrade. Being of the same age, born in the same rank of society, and having received the same education, they resembled each other somewhat in character and inclinations. In some respects their fates had been similar: both had married for love, both had soon become widowers, and both had been left with an only child. The son of Doubrovsky was studying at St. Petersburg; the daughter of Kirila Petrovitch grew up under the eyes of her father, and Troekouroff often said to Doubrovsky:

“Listen, brother Andrei Gavrilovitch; if your Volodka<sup>[3]</sup> should be successful, I will give him Masha<sup>[4]</sup> for his wife, in spite of his being as naked as a goshawk.”

Andrei Gavrilovitch used to shake his head, and generally replied:

“No’, Kirila Petrovitch; my Volodka is no match for Maria Kirilovna. A poor petty noble, such as he, would do better to marry a poor girl of the petty nobility, and be the head of his house, rather than become the bailiff of some spoilt little woman.”

Everybody envied the good understanding existing between the haughty Troekouroff and his poor neighbour, and wondered at the boldness of the latter when, at the table of Kirila Petrovitch, he expressed his own opinion frankly, and did not hesitate to maintain an opinion contrary to that of his host. Some attempted to imitate him and ventured to overstep the limits of the license accorded them; but Kirila Petrovitch taught them such a lesson, that they never afterwards felt any desire to repeat the experiment. Doubrovsky alone remained beyond the range of this general law. But an unexpected incident deranged and altered all this.

One day, in the beginning of autumn, Kirila Petrovitch prepared to go out hunting. Orders had been given the evening before for the huntsmen and gamekeepers to be ready at five o’clock in the morning. The tent and kitchen had been sent on beforehand to the place where Kirila Petrovitch was to dine. The host and his guests went to the kennel, where more than five hundred harriers and greyhounds lived in luxury and warmth, praising the generosity of Kirila Petrovitch in their canine language. There was also a hospital for the sick dogs, under the care of staff-surgeon Timoshka, and a separate place where the bitches brought forth and suckled their pups. Kirila Petrovitch was proud of this magnificent establishment, and never missed an opportunity of boasting about it, before his guests, each of whom had inspected it at least twenty times. He walked through the kennel, surrounded by his guests and accompanied by Timoshka and the head gamekeepers, pausing before some of the compartments, either to ask, after the health of some sick dog, to make some observation more or less just and severe, or to call some dog to him; by name and speak caressingly to it. The guests considered it their duty to go into raptures over Kirila Petrovitch’s kennel; Doubrovsky alone remained silent and frowned. He was an ardent sportsman; but his modest fortune only permitted him to keep two harriers and one greyhound, and he could not restrain a certain feeling of envy at the sight of this magnificent establishment.

“Why do you frown, brother?” Kirila Petrovitch asked him. “Does not my kennel please you?”

"No," replied Doubrovsky abruptly: "the kennel, is marvellous, but I doubt whether your people live as well as your dogs."

One of the gamekeepers took offence.

"Thanks to God and our master, we have nothing to complain of," said he; "but if the truth must be told, there are certain nobles who would not do badly if they exchanged their manor-house for one of the compartments of this kennel: they would be better fed and feel warmer."

Kirila Petrovitch burst out laughing at this insolent remark from his servant, and the guests followed his example, although they felt that the gamekeeper's joke might apply to them also. Doubrovsky turned pale and said not a word. At that moment a basket, containing some new-born puppies, was brought to Kirila Petrovitch; he chose two out of the litter and ordered the rest to be drowned. In the meantime Andrei Gavrilovitch had disappeared without anybody having observed it.

On returning with his guests from the kennel, Kirila Petrovitch sat down to supper, and it was only then that he noticed the absence of Doubrovsky. His people informed him that Andrei Gavrilovitch had gone home. Troekouroff immediately gave orders that he was to be overtaken and brought back without fail. He had never gone hunting without Doubrovsky, who was a fine and experienced connoisseur in all matters relating to dogs, and an infallible umpire in all possible disputes connected with sport. The servant who had galloped after him, returned while they were still seated at table, and informed his master that Andrei Gavrilovitch had refused to listen to him and would not return. Kirila Petrovitch, as usual, was heated with liquor, and becoming very angry, he sent the same servant a second time to tell Andrei Gavrilovitch that if he did not return at once to spend the night at Pokrovskoe, he, Troekouroff, would break off all friendly intercourse with him for ever. The servant galloped off again. Kirila Petrovitch rose from the table, dismissed his guests retired to bed.

The next day his first question was: "Is Andrei Gavrilovitch here?" A triangular-shaped letter was handed to him. Kirila Petrovitch ordered his secretary to read it aloud, and the following is what he heard:

"Gracious Sir!

"I do not intend to return to Pokrovskoe until you send the dog-feeder Paramoshka to me with an apology: I shall retain the liberty of punishing or for forgiving him. I cannot put up with jokes from your servants, nor do I intend to put up with them from you, as I am not a buffoon, but a gentleman of ancient family. I remain your obedient servant,

"ANDREI DOUBROVSKY."

According to present ideas of etiquette, such a letter would be very unbecoming; it irritated Kirila Petrovitch, not by its strange style, but by its substance.

“What!” exclaimed Troekouroff, springing barefooted out of bed; “send my people to him with an apology! And he to be at liberty to punish or pardon them! What can he be thinking of? Does he know with whom he is dealing? I’ll teach him a lesson! He shall know what it is to oppose Troekouroff!”

Kirila Petrovitch dressed himself and set out for the hunt with his usual ostentation. But the chase was not successful; during the whole of the day one hare only was seen, and that escaped. The dinner in the field, under the tent, was also a failure, or at least it was not to the taste of Kirila Petrovitch, who struck the cook, abused the guests, and on the return journey rode intentionally, with all his suite, through the fields of Doubrovsky.

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[1]Alluding to the deposition and assassination of Peter III., and the accession of his wife Catherine II.

[2]One of Catherine’s partisans in the revolution of 1762.

[3]Diminutive of Vladimir.

[4]Diminutive of Maria or Mary.

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## CHAPTER II.

Several days passed, and the animosity between the two neighbours did not subside. Andrei Gavrilovitch returned no more to Pokrovskoe, and Kirila Petrovitch, feeling dull without him, vented his spleen in the most insulting expressions, which, thanks to the zeal of the neighbouring nobles, reached Doubrovsky revised and augmented. A fresh incident destroyed the last hope of a reconciliation.

One day, Doubrovsky was going the round of his little estate, when, on approaching a grove of birch trees, he heard the blows of an axe, and a minute afterwards the crash of a falling tree; he hastened to the spot and found some of the Pokrovskoe peasants stealing his wood. Seeing him, they took to flight; but Doubrovsky, with the assistance of his coachman, caught two of them, whom he brought home bound. Moreover, two horses, belonging to the enemy, fell into the hands of the conqueror.

Doubrovsky was exceedingly angry. Before this, Troekouroff's people, who were well-known robbers, had never dared to play tricks within the boundaries of his property, being aware of the friendship which existed between him and their master. Doubrovsky now perceived that they were taking advantage of the rupture which had occurred between him and his neighbour, and he resolved, contrary to all ideas of the rules of war, to teach his prisoners a lesson with the rods which they themselves had collected in his grove, and to send the horses to work and to incorporate them with his own cattle.

The news of these proceedings reached the ears of Kirila Petrovitch that very same day. He was almost beside himself with rage, and in the first moment of his passion, he wanted to take all his domestics and make an attack upon Kistenevka (for such was the name of his neighbour's village), raze it to the ground, and besiege the landholder in his own residence. Such exploits were not rare with him; but his thoughts soon took another direction. Pacing with heavy steps up and down the hall, he glanced casually out of the window, and saw a *troika* in the act of stopping at his gate. A man in a leather travelling-cap and a frieze cloak stepped out of the *telega* and proceeded towards the wing occupied by the bailiff. Troekouroff recognized the assessor Shabashkin, and gave orders for him to be sent in to him. A minute afterwards Shabashkin stood before Kirila Petrovitch, and bowing repeatedly, waited respectfully to hear what he had to say to him.

"Good day—what is your name?" said Troekouroff: "Why have you come?"

"I was going to the town, Your Excellency," replied Shabashkin, "and I called on Ivan Demyanoff to know if there; were any orders."

"You have come at a very opportune moment—what is your name? I have need of you. Take a glass of brandy and listen to me."

Such a friendly welcome agreeably surprised the assessor: he declined the brandy, and listened to Kirila Petrovitch with all possible attention.

"I have a neighbour," said Troekouroff, "a small proprietor, a rude fellow, and I want to take his property from him.... What do you think of that?"

"Your Excellency, are there any documents—?"

"Don't talk nonsense, brother,[\[1\]](#) what documents are you talking about? The business in this case is to take his property away from him, with or without documents. But stop! This estate belonged to us at one time. It was bought from a certain Spitsin, and then sold to Doubrovsky's father. Can't you make a case out of that?"

"It would be difficult, Your Excellency: probably the sale was effected in strict accordance with the law."

"Think, brother; try your hardest."

"If, for example, Your Excellency could in some way obtain from your neighbour the contract, in virtue of which he holds possession of his estate, then, without doubt—"

"I understand, but that is the misfortune: all his papers were burnt at the time of the fire."

"What! Your Excellency, his papers were burnt? What could be better? In that case, take proceedings according to law; without the slightest doubt you will receive complete satisfaction."

"You think so? Well, see to it, I rely upon your zeal, and you can rest assured of my gratitude."

Shabashkin, bowing almost to the ground, took his departure; from that day he began to devote all his energies to the business intrusted to him and, thanks to his prompt action, exactly a fortnight afterwards Doubrovsky received from the town a summons to appear in court and to produce the documents, in virtue of which he held possession of the village of Kistenevka.

Andrei Gavrilovitch, greatly astonished by this unexpected request, wrote that very same day a somewhat rude reply, in which he explained that the village of Kistenevka became his on the death of his father, that he held it by right of inheritance, that Troekouroff had nothing to do with the matter, and that all adventitious pretensions to his property were nothing but the outcome of chicanery and roguery. Doubrovsky had no experience in litigation. He generally

followed the dictates of common sense, a guide rarely safe, and nearly always insufficient.

This letter produced a very agreeable impression on the mind of Shabashkin; he saw, in the first place, that Doubrovsky knew very little about legal matters; and, in the second, that it would not be difficult to place such a passionate and indiscreet man in a very disadvantageous position.

Andrei Gavrilovitch, after a more careful consideration of the questions addressed to him, saw the necessity of replying more circumstantially. He wrote a sufficiently pertinent paper, but in the end this proved insufficient also.

The business dragged on. Confident in his own right, Andrei Gavrilovitch troubled himself very little about the matter; he had neither the inclination nor the means to scatter money about him, and he began to deride the mercenary consciences of the scribbling fraternity. The idea of being made the victim of treachery never entered his head. Troekouroff, on his side, thought as little of winning the case he had devised. Shabashkin took the matter in hand for him, acting in his name, threatening and bribing the judges and quoting and interpreting the ordinances in the most distorted manner possible.

At last, on the 9th day of February, in the year 18—, Doubrovsky received, through the town police, an invitation to appear at the district court to hear the decision in the matter of the disputed property between himself—Lieutenant Doubrovsky, and General-in-Chief Troekouroff, and to sign his approval or disapproval of the verdict. That same day Doubrovsky set out for the town. On the road he was overtaken by Troekouroff. They glared haughtily at each other, and Doubrovsky observed a malicious smile upon the face of his adversary.

Arriving in town, Andrei Gavrilovitch stopped at the house of an acquaintance, a merchant, with whom he spent the night, and the next morning he appeared before the Court. Nobody paid any attention, to him. After him arrived Kirila Petrovitch. The members of the Court received him with every manifestation of the deepest submission, and an armchair was brought to him out of consideration for his rank, years and corpulence. He sat down; Andrei Gavrilovitch stood leaning against the wall. A deep silence ensued, and the secretary began in a sonorous voice to read the decree of the Court.

When the secretary had ceased reading, the assessor arose and, with a low bow, turned to Troekouroff, inviting him to sign the paper which he held out to him. Troekouroff, quite triumphant, took the pen and wrote beneath the decision of the Court his complete satisfaction.

It was now Doubrovsky's turn. The secretary handed the paper to him, but Doubrovsky stood immovable, with his head bent down. The secretary repeated his invitation: "To subscribe his full and complete satisfaction, or his manifest dissatisfaction, if he felt in his conscience that his case was just, and intended to appeal against the decision of the Court."

Doubrovsky remained silent ... Suddenly he raised his head, his eyes sparkled, he stamped his



foot, pushed back the secretary, with such force, that he fell, seized the inkstand, hurled it at the assessor, and cried in a wild voice:

“What! you don’t respect the Church of God! Away, you race of Shem!”

Then turning to Kirila Petrovitch:

“Has such a thing ever been heard of, Your Excellency?” he continued. “The huntsmen lead greyhounds into the Church of God! The dogs are running about the church! I will teach them a lesson presently!”

Everybody was terrified. The guards rushed in on hearing the noise, and with difficulty overpowered him. They led him out and placed him in a sledge. Troekouroff went out after him, accompanied by the whole Court. Doubrovsky’s sudden madness had produced a deep impression upon his imagination; the judges, who had counted upon his gratitude, were not honoured by receiving a single affable word from him. He returned immediately to Pokrovskoe, secretly tortured by his conscience, and not at all satisfied with the triumph of his hatred. Doubrovsky, in the meantime, lay in bed. The district doctor—not altogether a blockhead—bled him and applied leeches and mustard-plasters to him. Towards evening he began to feel better, and the next day he was taken to Kistenevka, which scarcely belonged to him any longer.

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[1]Superiors in Russia frequently make use of this term in addressing their inferiors.

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## CHAPTER III.

Some time elapsed, but the health of the stricken Doubrovsky showed no signs of improvement. It is true that the fits of madness did not recur, but his strength became visibly less. He forgot his former occupations, rarely left his room, and for days together remained absorbed in his own reflections. Egorovna, a kind-hearted old woman who had once tended his son, now became his nurse. She waited upon him like a child, reminded him when it was time to eat and sleep, fed him and even put him to bed. Andrei Gavrilovitch obeyed her, and had no intercourse with anybody else. He was not in a condition to think about his affairs or to look after his property, and Egorovna saw the necessity of informing young Doubrovsky, who was then serving in one of the regiments of Foot Guards stationed in St. Petersburg, of everything that had happened. And so, tearing a leaf from the account-book, she dictated to Khariton the cook, the only literate person in Kistenevka, a letter, which she sent off that same day to the town post.

But it is time for the reader to become acquainted with the real hero of this story.

Vladimir Doubrovsky had been educated at the cadet school and, on leaving it, had entered the Guards as sub-lieutenant. His father spared nothing that was necessary to enable him to live in a becoming manner, and the young man received from home a great deal more than he had any right to expect. Being imprudent and ambitious, he indulged in extravagant habits, ran into debt, and troubled himself very little about the future. Occasionally the thought crossed his mind that sooner or later he would be obliged to take to himself a rich bride.

One evening, when several officers were spending a few hours with him, lolling on the couches and smoking pipes with amber mouth-pieces, Grisha,<sup>[1]</sup> his valet, handed him a letter, the address and seal of which immediately attracted the young man's attention. He hastily opened it and read the following:

"Our Lord Vladimir Andreivitch, I, your old nurse, venture to inform you of the health of your papa. He is very poorly, sometimes he wanders in his talk, and the whole day long he sits like a stupid child—but life and death are in the hands of God. Come to us, my bright little falcon, and, we will send horses to meet you at Pesotchnoe. We hear that the Court is going to hand us over to Kirila Petrovitch Troekouroff, because it is said that we belong to him, although we have always belonged to you, and have always heard so ever since we can remember. You might, living in St. Petersburg, inform our Father the Czar of this, and he will not allow us to be wronged. It has been raining here for the last fortnight, and the shepherd Rodia died about Michaelmas Day. I send my maternal blessing to Grisha. Does he serve you well? I remain your faithful nurse,

"ARINA EGOROVNA BOUZIREVA."

Vladimir Doubrovsky read these somewhat unintelligible lines several times with great agitation. He had lost his mother during his childhood, and, hardly knowing his father, had been taken to St. Petersburg when he was eight years of age. In spite of that, he was romantically attached to his father, and having had but little opportunity of enjoying the pleasures of family life, he loved it all the more in consequence.

The thought of losing his father pained him exceedingly, and the condition of the poor invalid, which he guessed from his nurse's letter, horrified him. He imagined his father, left in an out-of-the-way village, in the hands of a stupid old woman and her fellow servants, threatened by some misfortune, and expiring without help in the midst of tortures both mental and physical. Vladimir Andreivitch reproached himself with criminal neglect. Not having received any news of his father for a long time, he had not even thought of making inquiries about him, supposing him to be travelling about or engaged in the management of his estate. That same evening he began to take the necessary steps for obtaining leave of absence, and two days afterwards he set out in the stage coach, accompanied by his faithful Grisha.

Vladimir Andreivitch neared the post station at which he was to take the turning for Kistenevka. His heart was filled with sad forebodings; he feared that he would no longer find his father alive. He pictured to himself the dreary kind of life that "awaited him in the village: the loneliness, solitude, poverty and cares of business of which he knew nothing. Arriving at the station, he went to the postmaster and asked for fresh horses. The postmaster, having inquired where he was going, informed him that horses sent from Kistenevka had been waiting for him for the last four days. Soon appeared before Vladimir Andreivitch the old coachman Anton, who used formerly to take him over the stables and look after his pony. Anton's eyes filled with tears on seeing his young master, and bowing to the ground, he told him that his old master was still alive, and then hastened to harness the horses. Vladimir Andreivitch declined the proffered breakfast, and hastened to depart. Anton drove him along the cross country roads, and conversation began between them.

"Tell me, if you please, Anton, what is this business between my father and Troekouroff?"

"God knows, my little father Vladimir Andreivitch; our master, they say, had a dispute with Kirila Petrovitch, and the latter summoned him before the judge, though very often he himself is the judge. It is not the business of servants to discuss the affairs of their masters, but it was useless of your father to contend against Kirila Petrovitch: better had it been if he had not opposed him."

"It seems, then, that this Kirila Petrovitch does just what he pleases among you?"

"He certainly does, master: he does not care a rap for the assessor, and the chief of police runs on errands for him. The nobles repair to his house to do homage to him, for as the proverb says: 'Where there is a trough, there will the pigs be also.'"

“Is it true that he wants to take our estate from us?”

“Oh, master, that is what we have heard. A few days ago, the sexton from Pokrovskoe said at the christening held at the house of our overseer: ‘You do well to enjoy yourselves while you are able, for you’ll not have much chance of doing so when Kirila Petrovitch takes you in hand;’ and Nikita the blacksmith said to him: ‘Savelitch, don’t distress your fellow sponsor, don’t disturb the guests. Kirila Petrovitch is what he is, and Andrei Gavrilovitch is the same—and we are all God’s and the Czar’s.’ But you cannot sew a button upon another person’s mouth.”

“Then you do not wish to pass into the possession of Troekouroff?”

“Into the possession of Kirila Petrovitch! The Lord save and preserve us! His own people fare badly enough, and if he got possession of strangers, he would strip off, not only their skin, but their flesh also. No, may God grant long life to Andrei Gavrilovitch; and if God should take him to Himself, we want nobody but you, our benefactor. Do not give us up, and we will stand by you.”

With these words, Anton flourished his whip, shook the reins, and the horses broke into a brisk trot.

Touched by the devotion of the old coachman, Doubrovsky became silent and gave himself up to his own reflections. More than an hour passed; suddenly Grisha roused him by exclaiming: “There is Pokrovskoe!” Doubrovsky raised his head. They were just then driving along the bank of a broad lake, out of which flowed a small stream winding among the hills. On one of these, above a thick green wood, rose the green roof and belvedere of a huge stone house, together with a five-domed church with an ancient belfry; round about were scattered the village huts with their gardens and wells. Doubrovsky recognized these places; he remembered that on that very hill he had played with little Masha Troekouroff, who was two years younger than he, and who even then gave promise of being very beautiful. He wanted to make inquiries of Anton about her, but a certain bashfulness restrained him.

On approaching the castle, he perceived a white dress flitting among the trees in the garden. At that moment Anton whipped the horses, and impelled by that vanity, common to village coachmen as to drivers in general, he drove at full speed over the bridge and past the garden. On emerging from the village, they ascended the hill, and Vladimir perceived the little wood of birch trees, and to the left, in an open place, a small grey house with a red roof. His heart began to beat—before him was Kistenevka, the humble abode of his father.

About ten minutes afterwards he drove into the courtyard. He looked around him with indescribable emotion: twelve years had elapsed since he last saw his native place. The little birches, which had just then been planted near the wooden fence, had now become tall trees with long branches. The courtyard, formerly ornamented with three regular flower-beds, between which ran a broad path carefully swept, had been converted into a meadow, in which was grazing a tethered horse. The dogs began to bark, but recognizing Anton, they became silent.

and commenced wagging their shaggy tails. The servants came rushing out of the house and surrounded the young master with loud manifestations of joy. It was with difficulty that he was able to make his way through the enthusiastic crowd. He ran up the well-worn steps; in the vestibule he was met by Egorovna, who tearfully embraced him.

“How do you do, how do you do, nurse?” he repeated, pressing the good old woman to his heart. “And my father? Where is he? How is he?”

At that moment a tall old man, pale and thin, in a dressing-gown and cap, entered the room, dragging one foot after the other with difficulty.

“Where is Volodka?” said he in a weak voice, and Vladimir embraced his father with affectionate emotion.

The joy proved too much for the sick man; he grew weak, his legs gave way beneath him, and he would have fallen, if his son had not held him up.

“Why did you get out of bed?” said Egorovna to him. “He cannot stand upon his feet, and yet he wants to do the same as other people.”

The old man was carried back to his bedroom. He tried to converse with his son, but he could not collect his thoughts, and his words had no connection with each other. He became silent and fell into a kind of somnolence. Vladimir was struck by his condition. He installed himself in the bedroom and requested to be left alone with his father. The household obeyed, and then all turned towards Grisha and led him away to the servants’ hall, where they gave him a hearty welcome according to the rustic custom, the while they wearied him with questions and compliments.

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[\[1\]](#)Diminutive of Gregory.

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## CHAPTER IV.

A few days after his arrival, young Doubrovsky wished to turn his attention to business, but his father was not in a condition to give him the necessary explanations, and Andrei Gavrilovitch had no confidential adviser. Examining his papers, Vladimir only found the first letter of the assessor and a rough copy of his father's reply to it. From these he could not obtain any clear idea of the lawsuit, and he determined to await the result, trusting in the justice of his father's cause.

Meanwhile the health of Andrei Gavrilovitch grew worse from hour to hour. Vladimir foresaw that his end was not far off, and he never left the old man, now fallen into complete childishness.

In the meantime the period of delay had expired and no appeal had been presented. Kistenevka therefore belonged to Troekouroff. Shabashkin came to him, and with a profusion of salutations and congratulations, inquired when His Excellency intended to enter into possession of his newly-acquired property—would he go and do so himself, or would he deign to commission somebody else to act as his representative?

Kirila Petrovitch felt troubled. By nature he was not avaricious; his desire for revenge had carried him too far, and he now felt the rebukings of his conscience. He knew in what condition his adversary, the old comrade of his youth, lay, and his victory brought no joy to his heart. He glared sternly at Shabashkin, seeking for some pretext to vent his displeasure upon him, but not finding a suitable one, he said to him in an angry tone:

“Be off! I do not want you!”

Shabashkin, seeing that he was not in a good humour, bowed and hastened to withdraw, and Kirila Petrovitch, left alone, began to pace up and down, whistling: “Thunder of victory resound!” which, with him, was always a sure sign of unusual agitation of mind.

At last he gave orders for the *droshky*[\[1\]](#) to be got ready, wrapped himself up warmly (it was already the end of September), and, himself holding the reins, drove out of the courtyard.

He soon caught sight of the house of Andrei Gavrilovitch. Contradictory feelings filled his soul. Satisfied vengeance and love of power had, to a certain extent, deadened his more noble sentiments, but at last these latter prevailed. He resolved to effect a reconciliation with his old neighbour, to efface the traces of the quarrel and restore to him his property. Having eased his soul with this good intention, Kirila Petrovitch set off at a gallop towards the residence of his neighbour and drove straight into the courtyard.



At that moment the invalid was sitting at his bedroom window. He recognized Kirila Petrovitch—and his face assumed an expression of terrible emotion: a livid flush replaced his usual pallor, his eyes gleamed and he uttered a few unintelligible sounds. His son, who was sitting there examining the account books, raised his head and was struck by the change in his father's condition. The sick man pointed with his finger towards the courtyard with an expression of rage and horror. At that moment the voice and heavy tread of Egorovna were heard:

"Master, master! Kirila Petrovitch has come! Kirila Petrovitch is on the steps!" she cried.... "Lord God! What is the matter? What has happened to him?"

Andrei Gavrilovitch had hastily gathered up the skirts of his dressing-gown and was preparing to rise from his armchair. He succeeded in getting upon his feet—and then suddenly fell. His son rushed towards him; the old man lay insensible and without breathing: he had been attacked by paralysis.

"Quick, quick! hasten to the town for a doctor!" cried Vladimir.

"Kirila Petrovitch is asking for you," said a servant, entering the room.

Vladimir gave him a terrible look.

"Tell Kirila Petrovitch to take himself off as quickly as possible, before I have him turned out—go!"

The servant gladly left the room to execute his master's orders. Egorovna raised her hands to heaven.

"Little father," she exclaimed in a piping voice, "you will lose your head! Kirila Petrovitch will eat us all up."

"Silence, nurse," said Vladimir angrily: "send Anton at once to the town for a doctor."

Egorovna left the room. There was nobody in the antechamber; all the domestics had run out into the courtyard to look at Kirila Petrovitch. She went out on the steps and heard the servant deliver his young master's reply. Kirila Petrovitch heard it, seated in the *droshky*; his face became darker than night; he smiled contemptuously, looked threateningly at the assembled domestics, and then drove slowly out of the courtyard. He glanced up at the window where, a minute before, Andrei Gavrilovitch had been sitting, but he was no longer there. The nurse remained standing on the steps, forgetful of her master's injunctions. The domestics were noisily talking of what had just occurred. Suddenly Vladimir appeared in the midst of them, and said abruptly:

"There is no need for a doctor—my father is dead!" General consternation followed these

words. The domestics rushed to the room of their old master. He was lying in the armchair in which Vladimir had placed him; his right arm hung down to the ground, his head was bent forward upon his chest—there was not the least sign of life in his body, which, not yet cold, was already disfigured by death. Egorovna set up a howl. The domestics surrounded the corpse, which was left to their care, washed it, dressed it in a uniform made in the year 1797, and laid it out on the same table at which for so many years they had waited upon their master.

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[\[1\]](#)A low four-wheeled carriage.

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## CHAPTER V.

The funeral took place the third day. The body of the poor old man lay in the coffin, covered with a shroud and surrounded by candles. The dining-room was filled with domestics, ready to carry out the corpse. Vladimir and the servants raised the coffin. The priest went in front, followed by the clerk, chanting the prayers for the dead. The master of Kistenevka crossed the threshold of his house for the last time. The coffin was carried through the wood—the church lay just behind it. The day was clear and cold; the autumn leaves were falling from the trees. On emerging from the wood, they saw before them the wooden church of Kistenevka and the cemetery shaded by old lime trees. There reposed the body of Vladimir's mother; there, beside her tomb, a new grave had been dug the day before. The church was full of the Kistenevka peasantry, come to render the last homage to their master. Young Doubrovsky stood in the chancel; he neither wept nor prayed, but the expression of his face was terrible. The sad ceremony came to an end. Vladimir approached first to take leave of the corpse, after him came the domestics. The lid was brought and nailed upon the coffin. The women wept aloud, and the men frequently wiped away their tears with their fists. Vladimir and three of the servants carried the coffin to the cemetery, accompanied by the whole village. The coffin was lowered into the grave, all present threw upon it a handful of earth, the pit was filled up, the crowd saluted for the last time and then dispersed. Vladimir hastily departed, got ahead of everybody, and disappeared into the Kistenevka wood.

Egorovna, in the name of her master, invited the pope and all the clergy to a funeral dinner, informing them that her young master did not intend being present.

Then Father Anissim, his wife Fedorovna and the clerk took their way to the manor-house, discoursing with Egorovna upon the virtues of the deceased and upon what, in all probability, awaited his heir. The visit of Troekouroff and the reception given to him were already known to the whole neighbourhood, and the local politicians predicted that serious consequences would result from it.

"What is to be, will be," said the pope's wife: "but it will be a pity if Vladimir Andreivitch does not become our master. He is a fine young fellow, there is no denying that."

"And who is to be our master if he is not to be?" interrupted Egorovna. "Kirila Petrovitch need not put himself out—he has not got a coward to deal with. My young falcon will know how to defend himself, and with God's help, he will not lack friends. Kirila Petrovitch is too overweening; and yet he slunk away with his tail between his legs when my Grishka [\[1\]](#) cried out to him: 'Be off, you old cur! Clear out of the place!'"

"Oh! Egorovna," said the clerk, "however could he bring his tongue to utter such words? I think I would rather bring myself to face the devil, than look askant at Kirila Petrovitch. As you look at

him, you become terrified, and your very backbone seems to curve!”

“Vanity, vanity!” said the priest: “the service for the dead will some day be chanted for Kirila Petrovitch, as today for Andrei Gavrilovitch; the funeral may perhaps be more imposing, and more guests may be invited; but are not all equal in the sight of God?”

“Oh, father, we wanted to invite all the neighbourhood, but Vladimir Andreivitch did not wish it. Don’t be alarmed, we have plenty to entertain people with.... but what would you have had us do? At all events, if there are not many people, I can treat you well, my dear friends.”

This enticing promise and the hope of finding a toothsome pie, caused the talkers to quicken their steps, and they safely reached the manor-house, where the table was already laid and brandy served out.

Meanwhile Vladimir advanced further into the depth of the wood, endeavouring by exercise and fatigue to deaden the affliction of his soul. He walked on without taking any notice of the road; the branches constantly grazed and scratched him, and his feet continually sank into the swamp—he observed nothing. At last he reached a small glade surrounded by trees on every side; a little stream wound silently through the trees, half-stripped of their leaves by the autumn. Vladimir stopped, sat down upon the cold turf, and thoughts, each more gloomy than the other, oppressed his soul.... He felt his loneliness very keenly; the future appeared to him enveloped in terrible clouds. Troekouroff’s enmity foreboded fresh misfortunes for him. His modest heritage might pass from him into the hands of a stranger, in which case beggary awaited him. For a long time he sat quite motionless in the same place, observing the gentle flow of the stream, bearing along on its surface a few withered leaves, and vividly representing to him the analogy of life. At last he observed that it began to grow dark; he arose and sought for the road home, but for a long time he wandered about the unknown wood before he stumbled upon the path which led straight up to the gate of his house.

He had not gone far before he met the priest coming towards him with all his clergy. The thought immediately occurred to him that this foreboded misfortune.<sup>[2]</sup> He involuntarily turned aside and disappeared behind the trees. The priests had not observed him, and they continued talking very earnestly among themselves.

“Fly from evil and do good,” said the priest to his wife. “There is no need for us to remain here; it does not concern us, however the business may end.”

The priest’s wife made some reply, but Vladimir could not hear what she said.

Approaching the house, he saw a crowd of people; peasants and servants of the household were flocking into the courtyard. In the distance Vladimir could hear an unusual noise and murmur of voices. Near the coach-house stood two *troikas*. On the steps several unknown men in uniform were seemingly engaged in conversation.

"What does this mean?" he asked angrily of Anton, who ran forward to meet him. "Who are these people, and what do they want?"

"Oh, father Vladimir Andreivitch," replied Anton, out of breath, "the Court has come. They are giving us over to Troekouroff, they are taking us from your Honour!..."

Vladimir hung down his head; his people surrounded their unhappy master.

"You are our father," they cried, kissing his hands.

"We want no other master but you. We will die, but we will not leave you. Give us the order, Your Lordship, and we will soon settle matters with the Court."

Vladimir looked at them, and dark thoughts rose within him.

"Keep quiet," he said to them: "I will speak to the officers."

"That's it—speak to them, father," shouted the crowd: "put the accursed wretches to shame!"

Vladimir, approached the officials. Shabashkin, with his cap on his head, stood with his arms akimbo, looking proudly around him. The sheriff, a tall stout man, of about fifty years of age, with a red face and a moustache, seeing Doubrovsky approach, cleared his throat and called out in a hoarse voice:

"And therefore I repeat to you what I have already said: by the decision of the district Court, you now belong to Kirila Petrovitch Troekouroff, who is here represented by M. Shabashkin. Obey him in everything that he orders you; and you, women, love and honour him, as he loves you."

At this witty joke the sheriff began to laugh. Shabashkin and the other officials followed his example. Vladimir boiled over with indignation.

"Allow me to ask, what does all this mean?" he inquired, with pretended calmness, of the jocular sheriff.

"It means," replied the witty official, "that we have come to place Kirila Petrovitch Troekouroff in possession of this property, and to request certain others to take themselves off for good and all!"

"But I think that you could have communicated all this to me first, rather than to my peasants, and announced to the landholder the decision of the authorities——"

"The former landowner, Andrei Gavrilovitch, is dead according to the will of God; but who are you?" said Shabashkin, with an insolent look. "We do not know you, and we don't want to know you."

"Your Honour, that is our young master," said a voice in the crowd.

"Who dared to open his mouth?" said the sheriff, in a terrible tone. "That your master? Your master is Kirila Petrovitch Troekouroff.... do you hear, idiots?"

"Nothing of the kind!" said the same voice.

"But this is a revolt!" shrieked the sheriff. "Hi, bailiff, this way!"

The bailiff stepped forward.

"Find out immediately who it was that dared to answer me. I'll teach him a lesson!"

The bailiff turned towards the crowd and asked who had spoken. But all remained silent. Soon a murmur was heard at the back; it gradually grew louder, and in a minute it broke out into a terrible wail. The sheriff lowered his voice and was about to try to persuade them to be calm.

"Why do you stand looking at him?" cried the servants: "Come on, lads, forward!" And the crowd began to move.

Shabashkin and the other members of the Court rushed into the vestibule, and closed the door behind them.

"Seize them, lads!" cried the same voice, and the crowd pressed forward.

"Hold!" cried Doubrovsky: "idiots! what are you doing? You will ruin yourselves and me, too. Go home all of you, and leave me to myself. Don't fear, the Czar is merciful: I will present a petition to him—he will not let us be made the victims of an injustice. We are all his children. But how can he take your part, if you begin rebelling and plundering?"

This speech of young Doubrovsky's, his sonorous voice and imposing appearance, produced the desired effect. The crowd became quiet and dispersed; the courtyard became empty, the officials of the Court still remained inside the house. Vladimir sadly ascended the steps. Shabashkin opened the door, and with obsequious bows began to thank Doubrovsky for his generous intervention.

Vladimir listened to him with contempt and made no reply.



“We have resolved,” continued the assessor, “with your permission, to remain here for the night, as it is already dark, and your peasants might attack us on the road. Be kind enough to order some hay to be put down for us on the parlour floor, as soon as it is daylight, we will take our departure.”

“Do what you please,” replied Doubrovsky drily: “I am no longer master here.”

With these words he entered into his fathers room and locked the door behind him.

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[\[1\]](#)Diminutive of Gregory.

[\[2\]](#)To meet a priest is considered a bad omen in Russia.

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## CHAPTER VI.

"And so, all is finished!" said Vladimir to himself. "This morning I had a corner and a piece of bread; to-morrow I must leave the house where I was born. My father, with the ground where he reposes, will belong to that hateful man, the cause of his death and of my ruin!"... Vladimir clenched his teeth and fixed his eyes upon the portrait of his mother. The artist had represented her leaning upon a balustrade, in a white morning dress, with a rose in her hair.

"And that portrait will fall into the hands of the enemy of my family," thought Vladimir. "It will be thrown into a lumber room together with broken chairs, or hung up in the ante-room, to become an object of derision for his dog-keepers; and in her bedroom, in the room where my father died, will be installed his bailiff, or his harem. No, no! he shall not have possession of the house of mourning, from which he is driving me out."

Vladimir clenched his teeth again; terrible thoughts rose up in his mind. The voices of the officials reached him; they were giving their orders, demanding first one thing and then another, and disagreeably disturbing him in the midst of his painful meditations.

At last all became quiet.

Vladimir unlocked the drawers and boxes and began to examine the papers of the deceased. They consisted for the most part of farming accounts and letters connected with various matters of business. Vladimir tore them up without reading them. Among them he came across a packet with the inscription: "Letters from my wife." A prey to deep emotion, Vladimir began to read them. They had been written during the Turkish campaign, and were addressed to the army from Kistenevka. Madame Doubrovsky described to her husband her life in the country and her business concerns, complained with tenderness of the separation, and implored him to return home as soon as possible to the arms of his loving wife. In one of these letters, she expressed to him her anxiety concerning the health of little Vladimir; in another she rejoiced over his early intelligence, and predicted for him a happy and brilliant future. Vladimir was so absorbed in his reading, that he forgot everything else in the world as his mind conjured up visions of domestic happiness, and he did not observe how the time was passing: the clock upon the wall struck eleven. Vladimir placed the letters in his pocket, took up a candle and left the room. In the parlour the officials were sleeping on the floor. Upon the table were tumblers which they had emptied, and a strong smell of rum pervaded the entire room. Vladimir turned from them with disgust, and passed into the anteroom. There all was dark. Somebody, seeing the light, crouched into a corner. Turning the light towards him, Vladimir recognized Arkhip the blacksmith.

"Why are you here?" he asked, in surprise.

"I wanted—I came to find out if they were all in the house," replied Arkhip, in a low faltering voice.

"And why have you got your axe?"

"Why have I got my axe? Can anybody go about nowadays without an axe? These officials are such impudent knaves, that one never knows—"

"You are drunk; throw the axe down and go to bed."

"I drunk? Father Vladimir Andreivitch, God is my witness that not a single drop of brandy has passed my lips, nor has the thought of such a thing entered my mind. Was ever such a thing heard of? These clerks have taken it into their heads to rule over us and to drive our master out of the manor-house.... How they snore, the wretches! I should like to put an end to the whole lot of them at once."

Doubrovsky frowned.

"Listen, Arkhip," said he, after a short pause: "Get such ideas out of your head. It is not the fault of the officials. Light the lantern and follow me."

Arkhip took the candle out of his master's hand, found the lantern behind the stove, lit it, and then both of them softly descended the steps and proceeded around the courtyard. The watchman began beating upon an iron plate; the dogs commenced to bark.

"Who is on the watch?" asked Doubrovsky.

"We, little father," replied a thin voice: "Vassilissa and Loukeria."

"Go home," said Doubrovsky to them, "you are not wanted."

"You can have a holiday," added Arkhip.

"Thank you, benefactor," replied the women, and they immediately returned home.

Doubrovsky walked on further. Two men approached him: they challenged him, and Doubrovsky recognized the voices of Anton and Grisha.

"Why are you not in bed and asleep?" he asked them.

"This is no time for us to think of sleep," replied Anton. "Who would have thought that we

should ever have come to this?"

"Softly," interrupted Doubrovsky. "Where is Egorovna?"

"In the manor-house, in her room," replied Grisha.

"Go and bring her here, and make all our people get out of the house; let not a soul remain in it except the officials; and you, Anton, get the cart ready."

Grisha departed; a minute afterwards he returned with his mother. The old woman had not undressed that night; with the exception of the officials, nobody closed an eye.

"Are all here?" asked Doubrovsky. "Has anybody been left in the house?"

"Nobody, except the clerks," replied Grisha.

"Bring here some hay or some straw," said Doubrovsky. The servants ran to the stables and returned with armfuls of hay.

"Put it under the steps—that's it. Now, my lads, a light!"

Arkhip opened the lantern and Doubrovsky kindled a torch.

"Wait a moment," said he to Arkhip: "I think, in my hurry, that I locked the doors of the hall. Go quickly and open them."

Arkhip ran to the vestibule: the doors were open. He locked them, muttering in an undertone: "It's likely that I'll leave them open!" and then returned to Doubrovsky.

Doubrovsky applied the torch to the hay, which burst into a blaze, the flames rising to a great height and illuminating the whole courtyard.

"Alas!" cried Egorovna plaintively: "Vladimir Andreivitch, what are you doing?"

"Silence!" said Doubrovsky. "Now, children, farewell; I am going where God may direct me. Be happy with your new master."

"Our father, our benefactor!" cried the peasants, "we will die—but we will not leave you, we will go with you."

The horses were ready. Doubrovsky took his seat in the cart with Grisha; Anton whipped the

horses and they drove out of the courtyard.

In one moment the whole house was enveloped in flames. The floors cracked and gave way; the burning beams began to fall; a red smoke rose above the roof, and there arose piteous groans and cries of "Help, help!"

"Shout away!" said Arkhip, with a malicious smile, contemplating the fire.

"Dear Arkhip," said Egorovna to him, "save them, the scoundrels, and God will reward you."

"Let them shout," replied the blacksmith.

At that moment the officials appeared at the window, endeavouring to burst the double sash. But at the same instant the roof fell in with a crash—and the cries ceased.

Soon all the peasants came pouring into the courtyard. The women, screaming wildly, hastened to save their effects; the children danced about admiring the conflagration. The sparks flew up in a fiery shower, setting light to the huts.

"Now everything is right!" said Arkhip. "How it burns! It must be a grand sight from Pokrovskoe."

At that moment a new apparition attracted his attention. A cat ran along the roof of a burning barn, without knowing where to leap from. Flames surrounded it on every side. The poor creature cried for help with plaintive mewings; the children screamed with laughter on seeing its despair.

"What are you laughing at, you little demons?" said the blacksmith, angrily. "Do you not fear God? One of God's creatures is perishing, and you rejoice over it." Then placing a ladder against the burning roof, he mounted up towards the cat. She understood his intention, and, with grateful eagerness, clutched hold of his sleeve. The half-burnt blacksmith descended with his burden.

"And now, lads, good bye," he said to the dismayed peasants: "there is nothing more for me to do here. May you be happy. Do not think too badly of me."

The blacksmith took his departure. The fire raged for some time longer, and at last went out. Piles of red-hot embers glowed brightly in the darkness of the night, while round about them wandered the burnt-out inhabitants of Kistenevka.

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## CHAPTER VII.

The next day the news of the fire spread through all the neighbourhood. Everybody explained it in a different way. Some maintained that Doubrovsky's servants, having got drunk at the funeral, had set fire to the house through carelessness; others blamed the officials, who were drunk also in their new quarters. Some guessed the truth, and affirmed that the author of the terrible calamity was Doubrovsky himself, urged on to the committal of the deed by the promptings of resentment and despair. Many maintained that he had himself perished in the flames with the officials and all his servants.

Troekouroff came the next day to the scene of the conflagration, and conducted the inquest himself. It was stated that the sheriff, the assessor of the land Court, the attorney and his clerk, as well as Vladimir Doubrovsky, the nurse Egorovna, the servant Grisha, the coachman Anton, and the blacksmith Arkhip had disappeared—nobody knew where. All the servants declared that the officials perished at the moment when the roof fell in. Their charred remains in fact were discovered. The women, Vassilissa and Loukeria, said that they had seen Doubrovsky and Arkhip the blacksmith a few minutes before the fire. The blacksmith Arkhip, according to the general showing, was alive, and was probably the principal, if not the sole author of the fire. Strong suspicions fell upon Doubrovsky. Kirila Petrovitch sent to the Governor a detailed account of all that had happened, and a new suit was commenced.

Soon other reports furnished fresh food for curiosity and gossip. Brigands appeared and spread terror throughout the whole neighbourhood. The measures taken against them proved unavailing. Robberies; each more daring than the other, followed one after another. There was no security either on the roads or in the villages. Several *troikas*, filled with brigands, traversed the whole province in open daylight, stopping travellers and the mail. The villages were visited by them, and the manor-houses were attacked and set on fire. The chief of the band had acquired a great reputation for intelligence, daring, and a sort of generosity. Wonders were related of him. The name of Doubrovsky was upon every lip. Everybody was convinced that it was he, and nobody else, who commanded the daring robbers. One thing was remarkable: the domains and property of Troekouroff were spared. The brigands had not attacked a single barn of his, nor stopped a single load belonging to him. With his usual arrogance, Troekouroff attributed this exception to the fear which he had inspired throughout the whole province, as well as to the excellent police which he had organized in his villages. At first the neighbours smiled at the presumption of Troekouroff, and everyone expected that the uninvited guests would visit Pokrovskoe, where they would find something worth having, but at last they were compelled to agree and confess that the brigands showed him unaccountable respect. Troekouroff triumphed, and at the news of each fresh exploit on the part of Doubrovsky, he indulged in ironical remarks at the expense of the Governor, the sheriffs, and the regimental commanders, who always allowed the brigand chief to escape with impunity.



Meanwhile the 1st of October arrived, the day of the annual church festival in Troekouroff's village. But before we proceed to describe further events, we must acquaint the reader with some personages who are new to him, or whom we merely mentioned at the beginning of our story.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

The reader has probably already divined that the daughter of Kirila Petrovitch, of whom we have as yet said but very little, is the heroine of our story. At the period about which we are writing, she was seventeen years old, and in the full bloom of her beauty. Her father loved her to the verge of folly, but treated her with his characteristic wilfulness, at one time endeavouring to gratify her slightest whims, at another terrifying her by his coarse and sometimes brutal behaviour. Convinced of her attachment, he could yet never gain her confidence. She was accustomed to conceal from him her thoughts and feelings, because she never knew in what manner they would be received. She had no companions, and had grown up in solitude. The wives and daughters of the neighbours rarely visited at the house of Kirila Petrovitch, whose usual conversation and amusements demanded the companionship of men, and not the presence of ladies. Our beauty rarely appeared among the guests who were invited to her father's house. The extensive library, consisting for the most part of works of French writers of the eighteenth century, was given over to her charge. Her father never read anything except the "Perfect Cook," and could not guide her in the choice of books, and Masha, after having dipped into works of various kinds, had naturally given her preference to romances. In this manner she went on completing her education, first begun under the direction of Mademoiselle Micheau, in whom Kirila Petrovitch reposed great confidence, and whom he was at last obliged to send away secretly to another estate, when the results of this friendship became too apparent.

Mademoiselle Micheau left behind her a rather agreeable recollection. She was a good-natured girl, and had never misused the influence which she evidently exercised over Kirila Petrovitch, in which she differed from the other confidants, whom he constantly kept changing. Kirila Petrovitch himself seemed to like her more than the others, and a dark-eyed, roguish-looking little fellow of nine, recalling the southern features of Mademoiselle Micheau, was being brought up by him and was recognized as his son, notwithstanding the fact that quite a number of bare-footed lads ran about in front of his windows, who were as like Kirila Petrovitch as one drop of water is to another, and who were inscribed as forming part of his household. Kirila Petrovitch had sent to Moscow for a French tutor for his little son, Sasha,[\[1\]](#) and this tutor came to Pokrovskoe at the time of the events that we are now describing.

This tutor, by his prepossessing appearance and simple manners, produced a very agreeable impression upon the mind of Kirila Petrovitch. He presented to the latter his credentials, and a letter from one of Troekouroff's relations, with whom he had lived as tutor for four years. Kirila Petrovitch examined all these, and was dissatisfied only with the youthfulness of the Frenchman, not because he considered this agreeable defect incompatible with the patience and experience necessary for the unhappy calling of a tutor, but because he had doubts of his own, which he immediately resolved to have cleared up. For this purpose he ordered Masha to be sent to him. Kirila Petrovitch did not speak French, and she acted as interpreter for him.

"Come here, Masha: tell this Monsieur that I accept him only on condition that he does not venture to pay court to my girls, for if he should do so, the son of a dog, I'll... Translate that to him, Masha."

Masha blushed, and turning to the tutor, told him in French that her father counted upon his modesty and orderly conduct.

The Frenchman bowed to her, and replied that he hoped to merit esteem, even if favour were not shown to him. Masha translated his reply word for word.

"Very well, very well," said Kirila Petrovitch, "he needs neither favour nor esteem. His business is to look after Sasha and teach him grammar and geography—translate that to him."

Maria Kirilovna softened the rude expressions of her father in translating them, and Kirila Petrovitch dismissed his Frenchman to the wing of the house in which his room was situated.

Masha had not given a thought to the young Frenchman. Brought up with aristocratic prejudices, a tutor, in her eyes, was only a sort of servant or artizan; and servants or artizans did not seem to her to be men at all. Nor did she observe the impression that she had produced upon Monsieur Desforbes, nor his confusion, nor his agitation, nor the tremor in his voice. For several days afterwards, she met him very frequently, but without honouring him with much attention. In an unexpected manner, however, she received quite a new impression with respect to him.

In the courtyard of Kirila Petrovitch there were usually kept several young bears, and they formed one of the chief amusements of the master of Pokrovskoe. While they were young, they were brought every day into the parlour, where Kirila Petrovitch used to spend whole hours in amusing himself with them, setting them at cats and young dogs. When they were grown up, they were attached to a chain, to await being baited in earnest. Sometimes they were brought out in front of the windows of the manor-house, and an empty wine-cask, studded with nails, was put before them. The bear would sniff it, then touch it gently, and getting its paws pricked, it would become angry and push the cask with greater force, and so wound itself still more. The beast would then work itself into a perfect frenzy, and fling itself upon the cask, growling furiously, until they removed from the poor animal the object of its vain rage. Sometimes a pair of bears were harnessed to a *telega*, then, willingly or unwillingly, guests were placed in it, and the bears were allowed to gallop wherever chance might direct them. But the best joke of Kirila Petrovitch's was as follows:

A starving bear used to be shut up in an empty room and fastened by a rope to a ring screwed into the wall. The rope was nearly the length of the room, so that only the opposite corner was out of the reach of the ferocious beast. A novice was generally brought to the door of this room, and, as if by accident, pushed in along with the bear; the door was then locked, and the unhappy victim was left alone with the shaggy hermit. The poor guest, with torn skirts and scratched hands, soon sought the safe corner, but he was sometimes compelled to stand for three whole

hours, pressed against the wall, watching the savage beast, two steps from him, leaping and standing on its hind legs, growling, tugging at the rope and endeavouring to reach him. Such were the noble amusements of a Russian gentleman!

Some days after the arrival of the French tutor, Troekouroff thought of him, and resolved to give him a taste of the bear's room. For this purpose, he summoned him one morning, and conducted him along several dark corridors; suddenly a side door opened—two servants pushed the Frenchman into the room and locked the door after him. Recovering from his surprise, the tutor perceived the chained bear. The animal began to snort and to sniff at his visitor from a distance, and suddenly raising himself upon his hind legs, he advanced towards him.... The Frenchman was not alarmed; he did not retreat but awaited the attack. The bear drew near; Desforbes drew from his pocket a small pistol, inserted it in the ear of the hungry animal, and fired. The bear rolled over. Everybody was attracted to the spot by the report, the door was opened, and Kirila Petrovitch entered, astonished at the result of his joke.

Kirila Petrovitch wanted an explanation of the whole affair. Who had warned Desforbes of the joke, or how came he to have a loaded pistol in his pocket? He sent for Masha. Masha came and interpreted her father's questions to the Frenchman.

"I never heard even of the existence of the bear," replied Desforbes, "but I always carry a pistol about with me, because I do not intend to put up with an offence for which, on account of my calling, I cannot demand satisfaction."

Masha looked at him in astonishment and translated his words to Kirila Petrovitch. Kirila Petrovitch made no reply; he ordered the bear to be removed and its skin to be taken off; then turning to his people, he said:

"What a brave fellow! There is nothing of the coward about him. By the Lord, he is certainly no coward!"

From that moment he took a liking to Desforbes, and never thought again of putting him to the proof.

But this incident produced a still greater impression upon Maria Kirilovna. Her imagination had been struck: she had seen the dead bear, and Desforbes standing calmly over it and talking tranquilly to her. She saw that bravery and proud self-respect did not belong exclusively to one class, and from that moment she began to show regard for the young tutor, and this regard increased from day to day. A certain intimacy sprang up between them. Masha had a beautiful voice and great musical ability; Desforbes proposed to give her lessons. After that it will not be difficult for the reader to understand that Masha fell in love with him without acknowledging it to herself.

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[\[1\]](#) Diminutive of Alexander.

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## CHAPTER IX.

On the eve of the festival, of which we have already spoken, the guests began to arrive at Pokrovskoe. Some were accommodated at the manor-house and in the wings attached to it; others in the house of the bailiff; a third party was quartered upon the priest; and the remainder upon the better class of peasants. The stables were filled with the horses of the visitors, and the yards and coach-houses were crowded with vehicles of every sort. At nine o'clock in the morning the bells rang for mass, and everybody repaired to the new stone church, built by Kirila Petrovitch and annually enriched by his offerings. The church was soon crowded with such a number of distinguished worshippers, that the simple peasants could find no room within the edifice, and had to stand beneath the porch and inside the railings. The mass had not yet begun: they were waiting for Kirila Petrovitch. He arrived at last in a caliche drawn by six horses, and walked proudly to his place, accompanied by Maria Kirilovna. The eyes of both men and women were turned upon her—the former were astonished at her beauty, the latter examined her dress with great attention.

The mass began. The household singers sang in the choir, and Kirila Petrovitch joined in with them. He prayed without looking either to the right or to the left, and with proud humility he bowed himself to the ground when the deacon in a loud voice mentioned the name of the founder of the church.

The mass came to an end.[\[1\]](#) Kirila Petrovitch was the first to kiss the crucifix. All the others followed him; the neighbours approached him with respect, the ladies surrounded Masha. Kirila Petrovitch, on issuing from the church, invited everybody to dine with him, then he seated himself in the caliche and drove home. All the guests followed after him.

The rooms began to fill with the visitors; every moment new faces appeared, and it was with difficulty that the host could be approached. The ladies sat decorously in a semicircle, dressed in antiquated fashion, in dresses of faded but expensive material, all covered with pearls and brilliants. The men crowded round the *caviar*[\[2\]](#) and the *vodka*,[\[3\]](#) conversing among themselves with great animation. In the dining-room the table was laid for eighty persons; the servants were bustling about, arranging the bottles and decanters and adjusting the table-cloths.

At last the house-steward announced that dinner was ready. Kirila Petrovitch went first and took his seat at the table; the ladies followed after him, and took their places with an air of great gravity, observing a sort of precedence as they did so. The young ladies crowded together like a timid herd of kids, and took their places next to one another. Opposite to them sat the gentlemen. At the end of the table sat the tutor by the side of the little Sasha.

The servants began to pass the plates round according to the rank of the guests; when they were



in doubt about the latter point, they allowed themselves to be guided by instinct, and their guesses were nearly always correct. The noise of the plates and spoons mingled with the loud talk of the guests. Kirila Petrovitch looked gaily round his table and thoroughly enjoyed the happiness of being able to provide such a hospitable entertainment. At that moment a calèche, drawn by six horses, drove into the yard.

“Who is that?” asked the host.

“Anton Pafnoutitch,” replied several voices.

The doors opened, and Anton Pafnoutitch Spitsin, a stout man of about fifty years of age, with a round pockmarked face, adorned with a treble chin, rolled into the dining-room, bowing, smiling, and preparing to make his excuses.

“A cover here!” cried Kirila Petrovitch. “Pray sit down, Anton Pafnoutitch, and tell us what this means: you were not at my mass, and you are late for dinner. This is not like you. You are devout, and you love good cheer.”

“Pardon me,” replied Anton Pafnoutitch, fastening his serviette in the button-hole of his coat: “pardon me, little father Kirila Petrovitch, I started early on my journey, but I had not gone ten versts, when suddenly the tire of the front wheel snapped in two. What was to be done? Fortunately it was not far from the village. But by the time we had arrived there, and had found a blacksmith, and had got everything put to rights, three hours had elapsed. It could not be helped. To take the shortest route through the wood of Kistenevka, I did not dare, so we came the longest way round.”

“Ah, ah!” interrupted Kirila Petrovitch, “it is evident that you do not belong to the brave ten. What are you afraid of?”

“How, what am I afraid of, little father Kirila Petrovitch? And Doubrovsky? I might have fallen into his clutches. He is a young man who never misses his aim—he lets nobody off; and I am afraid he would have flayed *me* twice over, had he got hold of me.”

“Why, brother, such a distinction?”

“Why, father Kirila Petrovitch? Have you forgotten the lawsuit of the late Andrei Gavrilovitch? Was it not I who, to please you, that is to say, according to conscience and justice, showed that Doubrovsky held possession of Kistenevka without having any right to it, and solely through your condescension; and did not the deceased—God rest his soul!—vow that he would settle with me in his own way, and might not the son keep his father’s word? Hitherto the Lord has been merciful to me. Up to the present they have only plundered one of my barns, but one of these days they may find their way to the manor-house.”

"Where they would find a rich booty," observed Kirila Petrovitch: "I have no doubt that the little red cash-box is as full as it can be."

"Not so, father Kirila Petrovitch; there was a time when it was full, but now it is perfectly empty."

"Don't tell lies, Anton Pafnoutitch. We know you. Where do you spend money? At home you live like a pig, you never receive anybody, and you fleece your peasants. You do nothing with your money but hoard it up."

"You are only joking, father Kirila Petrovitch," murmured Anton Pafnoutitch, smiling; "but I swear to you that we are ruined," and Anton Pafnoutitch swallowed his host's joke with a greasy piece of fish pasty.

Kirila Petrovitch left him and turned to the new sheriff, who was his guest for the first time and who was sitting at the other end of the table, near the tutor.

"Well, Mr. Sheriff, give us a proof of your cleverness: catch Doubrovsky for us."

The sheriff looked disconcerted, bowed, smiled, stammered, and said at last:

"We will try, Your Excellency."

"H'm! 'we will try!' You have been trying for a long time to rid our country of brigands. Nobody knows how to set about the business. And, after all, why try to catch him? Doubrovsky's robberies are a blessing to the sheriffs: what with investigations, travelling expenses, and the money they put into their pockets. He will never be caught Why should such a benefactor be put down? Isn't that true, Mr. Sheriff?"

"Perfectly true, Your Excellency," replied the completely confused sheriff.

The guests roared with laughter.

"I like the fellow for his frankness," said Kirila Petrovitch: "but it is a pity that our late sheriff is no longer with us. If he had not been burnt, the neighbourhood would have been quieter. And what news of Doubrovsky? Where was he last seen?"

"At my house, Kirila Petrovitch," said a female voice: "last Tuesday he dined with me."

All eyes were turned towards Anna Savishna Globova, a very simple widow, beloved by everybody for her kind and cheerful disposition. Everyone prepared to listen to her story with the deepest interest.

"You must know that three weeks ago I sent my steward to the post with a letter for my Vaniusha.<sup>[4]</sup> I do not spoil my son, and moreover I haven't the means of spoiling him, even if I wished to do so. However, you know very well that an officer of the Guards must live in a suitable style, and I share my income with Vaniusha as well as I can. Well, I sent two thousand roubles to him; and although the thought of Doubrovsky came more than once into my mind, I thought to myself: the town is not far off—only seven, versts altogether, perhaps God will order all things for the best. But what happens? In the evening my steward returns, pale, tattered, and on foot. 'What is the matter? What has happened to you?' I exclaimed. 'Little mother Anna Savishna,' he replied, 'the brigands have robbed and almost killed me. Doubrovsky himself was there, and he wanted to hang me, but he afterwards had pity upon me and let me go. But he plundered me of everything—money, horse, and cart,' A faintness came over me. Heavenly Lord! What will become of my Vaniusha? There was nothing to be done. I wrote a fresh letter, telling him all that had happened, and sent him my blessing without a farthing of money. One week passed, and then another. Suddenly, one day, a calèche drove into my courtyard. Some general asked to see me: I gave orders for him to be shown in. He entered the room, and I saw before me a man of about thirty-five years of age, dark, with black hair, moustache and beard—the exact portrait of Koulneff. He introduced himself to me as a friend and comrade of my late husband, Ivan Andreivitch. He happened to be passing by, and he could not resist paying a visit to his old friend's widow, knowing that I lived there. I invited him to dine, and I set before him what God had sent me. We spoke of this and that, and at last we began to talk about Doubrovsky. I told him of my trouble. My general frowned. 'That is strange,' said he: 'I have heard that Doubrovsky does not attack everybody, but only people who are well known to be rich, and that even then he leaves them a part of their possessions and does not plunder them of everything. As for murdering people, nobody has yet accused him of that. Is there not some roguery here? Oblige me by sending for your steward.'

"The steward was sent for, and quickly made his appearance. But as soon as he caught sight of the general he stood as if petrified.

"'Tell me, brother, in what manner did Doubrovsky plunder you, and how was it that he wanted to hang you?' My steward began to tremble and fell at the general's feet.

"'Little father, I am guilty. The evil one led me astray. I have lied.'

"'If that is so,' replied the general, 'have the goodness to relate to your mistress how it all happened, and I will listen.'

"My steward could not recover himself.

"'Well, then,' continued the general, 'tell us where you met Doubrovsky.'

"'At the two pine trees, little father, at the two pine trees.'

“What did he say to you?

“He asked me who I was, where I was going, and why.’

“Well, and after that?’

“After that he demanded the letter and the money from me, and I gave them to him.’

“And he?’

“Well, and he ... little father, pardon me!’

“Well, what did he do?’

“He returned me the money and the letter, and said ‘Go, in the name of God, and put this in the post.’

“Well!’

“Little father, pardon me!’

“I will settle with you, my pigeon,’ said the general sternly. ‘And you, madam, order this scoundrel’s trunk to be searched, and then give him into my hands; I will teach him a lesson.’

“I guessed who his Excellency was, but I did not make any observation. The coachmen tied the steward to the box of the calèche; the money was found; the general remained to dine with me, and departed immediately afterwards, taking with him my steward. The steward was found the next day in the wood, tied to an oak, and as ragged as a lime tree.”

Everybody listened in silence to Anna Savishna’s story, especially the young ladies. Many of them secretly wished well to Doubrovsky, seeing in him a romantic hero, particularly Maria Kirilovna, an impulsive, sentimental girl, imbued with the mysterious horrors of Mrs. Anne Radcliffe.[\[5\]](#)

“And do you think, Anna Savishna, that it was Doubrovsky himself who visited you?” asked Kirila Petrovitch. “You are very much mistaken. I do not know who your guest may have been, but I feel quite sure that it was not Doubrovsky.”

“How, little father, not Doubrovsky? But who is it then, if not he, who stops travellers on the high road in order to search them?”

“I don’t know; but I feel confident that it is not Doubrovsky. I remember him as a child; I do, not

know whether his hair has turned black, but at that time he was a curly flaxen-haired boy. But I do know for a positive fact, that Doubrovsky is five years older than my Masha, and that consequently he is not thirty-five, but about twenty-three."

"Exactly so, Your Excellency," observed the sheriff: "I have in my pocket the description of Vladimir Doubrovsky. In that it is distinctly stated that he is twenty-three years of age."

"Ah!" said Kirila Petrovitch. "By the way, read it, and we will listen: it will not be a bad thing for us to know his description. Perhaps he may fall into our clutches, and if so, he will not escape in a hurry."

The sheriff drew from his pocket a rather dirty sheet of paper, unfolded it with an air of great importance, and began to read in a monotonous tone:

"Description of Doubrovsky, based upon the depositions of his former servants:

"Twenty-three years of age, medium height, clear complexion, shaves his beard, has brown eyes, flaxen hair, straight nose. Does not seem to have any particular marks."

"And is that all?" said Kirila Petrovitch.

"That is all," replied the sheriff, folding up the paper.

"I congratulate you, Mr. Sheriff. A very valuable document. With that description it will not be difficult for you to find Doubrovsky! Who is not of medium height? Who has not flaxen hair, a straight nose and brown eyes? I would wager that you would talk for three hours at a stretch to Doubrovsky himself, and you would never guess in whose company you were. There is no denying that these officials have wise heads."

The sheriff, meekly replacing the paper in his pocket, silently busied himself with his goose and cabbage. Meanwhile the servants had already gone the round of the guests several times, filling up each one's glass. Several bottles of Caucasus wine had been opened with a great deal of noise, and had been thankfully accepted under the name of champagne. Faces began to glow, and the conversation grew louder, more incoherent and more lively.

"No," continued Kirila Petrovitch, "we shall never see another sheriff like the late Taras Alexeievitch! He was not the man to be thrown off the scent very easily. I am very sorry that the fellow was burnt, for otherwise not one of the band would have got away from him. He would have laid his hands upon the whole lot of them, and not even Doubrovsky himself would have escaped. Taras Alexeievitch would perhaps have taken money from him, but he would not have let him go. Such was the way of the deceased. Evidently there is nothing else to be done but for me to take the matter in hand and go after the brigands with my people. I will begin by sending

out twenty men to scour the wood. My people are not cowards. Each of them would attack a bear single-handed, and they certainly would not fall back before a brigand."

"How is your bear, father Kirila Petrovitch?" asked Anton Pafnoutitch, being reminded by these words of his shaggy acquaintance and of certain pleasantries of which he had once been the victim.

"Misha<sup>[6]</sup> wishes you a long life,<sup>[7]</sup> replied Kirila Petrovitch: "he died a glorious death at the hands of the enemy. There is his conqueror!" Kirila Petrovitch pointed to the french tutor. "He has avenged your—if you will allow me to say so—do you remember?"

"How should I not remember?" said Anton Pafnoutitch, scratching his head: "I remember it only too well. So Misha is dead. I am very sorry for Misha—upon my word, I am very sorry! How amusing he was! How intelligent! You will not find another bear like him. And why did monsieur kill him?"

Kirila Petrovitch began, with great satisfaction, to relate the exploit of his Frenchman, for he possessed the happy faculty of boasting of everything that was about him. The guests listened with great attention to the story of Misha's death, and gazed in astonishment at Desforbes, who, not suspecting that his bravery was the subject of conversation, sat tranquilly in his place, giving advice to his restive pupil.

The dinner, after lasting about three hours, came to an end; the host placed his serviette upon the table, and everybody rose and repaired to the parlour, where awaited them coffee, cards, and a continuation of the carouse so excellently begun in the dining-room.

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[1]At the end of the service in the Russian Church, all the members of the congregation kiss the crucifix.

[2]The roes of sturgeons prepared and salted.

[3]Brandy.

[4]Diminutive of Ivan.

[5]A now almost forgotten romance writer, whose "Romance of the Forest," "Mysteries of Udolpho," and "Italian," were very popular a century ago.

[6]Diminutive of Michael—the familiar name for a bear in Russia.

[7]A Russian figure of speech which signifies that the person spoken of is dead.

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## CHAPTER X.

About seven o'clock in the evening, some of the guests wished to depart, but the host, merry with punch, ordered the gates to be locked, and declared that nobody should leave the house until the next morning. Music soon resounded, the doors of the saloon were thrown open and the ball began. The host and his familiar acquaintances sat in a corner, draining glass after glass, and admiring the gaiety of the young people. The old ladies played at cards. The gentlemen, as is always the case, except where a brigade of uhlans is stationed, were less in number than the ladies, and all the men, suitable for partners, were soon engaged for the dance. The tutor particularly distinguished himself among them; all the ladies wanted to have him as a partner, as they found it so exceedingly easy to waltz with him. He danced several times with Maria Kirilovna, and the ladies observed them with great interest. At last, about midnight, the tired host stopped the dancing, ordered supper to be served, and then betook himself off to bed.

The retirement of Kirila Petrovitch gave to the company more freedom and animation. The gentlemen ventured to sit near the ladies; the girls laughed and spoke in whispers to their neighbours; the ladies spoke in loud voices across the table; the gentlemen drank, disputed, and laughed boisterously. In a word, the supper was exceedingly merry, and left behind it a very agreeable impression.

One man only did not share in the general joy. Anton Pafnoutitch sat gloomy and silent in his place, ate absently, and seemed extremely uneasy. The conversation about the brigands had worked upon his imagination. We shall soon see that he had good cause to fear them.

Anton Pafnoutitch, in invoking God as a witness that the little red cash-box was empty, had not lied and sinned. The little red cash-box was really empty. The bank notes, which had at one time been in it, had been transferred to a leather pouch, which he carried on his breast under his shirt. This precaution alone quieted his distrust of everybody and his constant fear. Being compelled to spend the night in a strange house, he was afraid that he might be lodged in some solitary room, where thieves could easily break in. He looked round in search of a trustworthy companion, and at last his choice fell upon Desforges. His appearance,—indicative of strength,—but especially the bravery shown by him in his encounter with the bear, which poor Anton Pafnoutitch could never think of without a shudder, decided his choice. When they rose from the table, Anton Pafnoutitch began moving round the young Frenchman, clearing his throat and coughing, and at last he turned to him and addressed him:

“Hm! hm! Couldn't I spend the night in your room, mossoo, because you see——”

“*Que desire monsieur?*” asked Desforges, with a polite bow.



“Ah! what a pity, mossoo, that you have not yet learnt Russian. *Je vais moa chez vous coucher*. Do you understand?”

“*Monsieur, très volontiers,*” replied Desforges, “*veuillez donner des ordres en conséquence.*”

Anton Pafnoutitch, well satisfied with his knowledge of the French language, went off at once to make the necessary arrangements.

The guests began to wish each other good night, and each retired to the room assigned to him, while Anton Pafnoutitch accompanied the tutor to the wing. The night was dark. Desforges lighted the way with a lantern. Anton Pafnoutitch followed him boldly enough, pressing the hidden treasure occasionally against his breast, in order to convince himself that his money was still there.

On arriving at the wing, the tutor lit a candle and both began to undress; in the meantime Anton Pafnoutitch was walking about the room, examining the locks and windows, and shaking his head at the unassuring inspection. The doors fastened with only one bolt, and the windows had not yet their double frames.<sup>[1]</sup> He tried to complain to Desforges, but his knowledge of the French language was too limited to enable him to express himself with sufficient clearness. The Frenchman did not understand him, and Anton Pafnoutitch was obliged to cease his complaints. Their beds stood opposite each other; they both lay down, and the tutor extinguished the light.

“*Pourquoi vous toucher; pourquoi vous toucher?*” cried Anton Pafnoutitch, conjugating the Russian verb to extinguish, after the French manner. “I cannot *dormir* in the dark.”

Desforges did not understand his exclamations, and wished him good night.

“Accursed pagan!” muttered Spitsin, wrapping himself up in the bedclothes: “he couldn’t do without extinguishing the light. So much the worse for him. I cannot sleep without a light—*Mossoo, mossoo,*” he continued: “*Je ve avec vous parler.*”

But the Frenchman did not reply, and soon began to snore.

“He is snoring, the French brute,” thought Anton Pafnoutitch, “while I can’t even think of going to sleep. Thieves might walk in at any moment through the open doors or climb in through the window, and the firing of a cannon would not wake him, the beast!”

“*Mossoo! mossoo!*—the devil take you!”

Anton Pafnoutitch became silent. Fatigue and the effects of wine gradually overcame his fear. He began to doze, and soon fell into a deep sleep. A strange sensation aroused him. He felt in his sleep that someone was gently pulling him by the collar of his shirt. Anton Pafnoutitch opened

his eyes and, by the pale light of an autumn morning, he saw Desforbes standing before him. In one hand the Frenchman held a pocket pistol, and with the other he was unfastening the strings of the precious leather pouch. Anton Pafnoutitch felt faint.

*"Qu'est ce que c'est, Mossoo, qu'est ce que c'est?"* said he, in a trembling voice.

"Hush! Silence!" replied the tutor in pure Russian.

"Silence! or you are lost. I am Doubrovsky."

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[\[1\]](#)The Russians put double frames to their windows in winter.

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## CHAPTER XI.

We will now ask the permission of the reader to explain the last incidents of our story, by referring to the circumstances that preceded them, and which we have not yet had time to relate.

At the station of —, at the house of the postmaster, of whom we have already spoken, sat a traveller in a corner, looking very modest and resigned, and having the appearance of a plebeian or a foreigner, that is to say, of a man having no voice in connection with the post route. His *britchka*<sup>[1]</sup> stood in the courtyard, waiting for the wheels to be greased. Within it lay a small portmanteau, evidence of a very modest fortune. The traveller ordered neither tea nor coffee, but sat looking out of the window and whistling, to the great annoyance of the postmistress sitting behind the partition.

“The Lord has sent us a whistler,” said she, in a low voice. “How he does whistle! I wish he would burst, the accursed pagan!”

“What does it matter?” said her husband. “Let him whistle!”

“What does it matter?” retorted his angry spouse; “don’t you know the saying?”

“What saying? That whistling drives money away? Oh, Pakhomovna, whether he whistles or not, we shall get precious little money out of him.”

“Then let him go, Sidoritch. What pleasure have you in keeping him here? Give him the horses, and let him go to the devil.”

“He can wait, Pakhomovna. I have only three *troikas* in the stable, the fourth is resting. Besides, travellers of more importance may arrive at any moment, and I don’t wish to risk my neck for a Frenchman.... Hallo! there you are! Don’t you hear the sound of galloping! What a rate! Can it be a general?”

A caliche stopped in front of the steps. The servant jumped down from the box, opened the door, and a moment afterwards a young man in a military cloak and white cap entered the station. Behind him followed his servant, carrying a small box which he placed upon the window-ledge.

“Horses!” said the officer, in an imperious voice.

"Directly!" replied the postmaster: "your road-pass, if you please."

"I have no road-pass: I am not going to take the main road.... Besides, don't you recognize me?"

The postmaster hastened to hurry the postilions. The young man began to pace up and down the room. Then he went behind the partition, and inquired of the postmistress in a low voice:

"Who is that traveller?"

"God knows!" replied the postmistress: "some Frenchman or other. He has been five hours waiting for horses, and has done nothing but whistle the whole of the time. He has quite wearied me, the heathen!"

The young man spoke to the traveller in French.

"Where are you going to?" he asked.

"To the neighbouring town," replied the Frenchman: "and from there I am going to a landed proprietor who has engaged me as tutor without ever having seen me. I thought I should have reached the place to-day, but the postmaster has evidently decided otherwise. In this country it is difficult to procure horses, monsieur l'officier."

"And to which of the landed proprietors about here have you engaged yourself?" asked the officer.

"To Troekouroff," replied the Frenchman.

"To Troekouroff? Who is this Troekouroff?"

"*Ma foi*, monsieur. I have heard very little good of him. They say that he is a proud and wilful noble, and so harsh towards the members of his household, that nobody can live on good terms with him: that all tremble at his name, and that with his tutors he stands upon no ceremony whatever."

"And you have decided to engage yourself to such a monster?"

"What is to be done, monsieur l'officier? He proposes to give me good wages: three thousand roubles a year and everything found. Perhaps I may be more fortunate than the others. I have an aged mother: one half of my salary I will send to her for her support, and out of the rest of my money I shall be able in five years to save a small capital sufficient to make me independent for the rest of my life. Then, *bon soir*, I return to Paris and set up in business."

"Does anybody at Troekouroff's know you?" asked the officer.

"Nobody," replied the tutor. "He engaged me at Moscow, through one of his friends, whose cook is a countryman of mine, and who recommended me. I must tell you that I did not intend to be a tutor, but a confectioner; but I was told that in your country the profession of tutor is more lucrative."

The officer reflected.

"Listen to me," he said to the Frenchman: "What would you say if, instead of this engagement, you were offered ten thousand roubles, ready money, on condition that you returned immediately to Paris?"

The Frenchman looked at the officer in astonishment, smiled, and shook his head.

"The horses are ready," said the postmaster, entering the room at that moment.

The servant confirmed this statement.

"Presently," replied the officer: "leave the room for a moment." The postmaster and the servant withdrew "I am not joking," he continued in French. "I can give you ten thousand roubles; I only want your absence and your papers."

So saying, he opened his small box and took out of it several bank notes. The Frenchman opened his eyes. He did not know what to think.

"My absence ... my papers!" he repeated in astonishment. "Here are my papers ... but you are surely joking. What do you want my papers for?"

"That does not concern you. I ask you, do you consent or not?"

The Frenchman, still unable to believe his own ears, handed his papers to the young officer, who rapidly examined them.

"Your passport ... very well; your letter of recommendation ... let us see; the certificate of your birth ... capital! Well, here is your money; return home. Farewell."

The Frenchman stood as if glued to the spot. The officer came back.

"I had almost forgotten the most important thing of all. Give me your word of honour that all this will remain a secret between us.... Your word of honour."

“My word of honour,” replied the Frenchman. “But my papers? What shall I do without them?”

“In the first town you come to, announce that you have been robbed by Doubrovsky. They will believe you, and give you fresh papers. Farewell: God grant you a safe and speedy return to Paris, and may you find your mother in good health.”

Doubrovsky left the room, mounted the caliche, and galloped off.

The postmaster stood looking out of the window, and when the caliche had driven off, he turned to his wife, exclaiming:

“Pakhomovna, do you know who that was? That was Doubrovsky!”

The postmistress rushed towards the window, but it was too late. Doubrovsky was already a long way off. Then she began to scold her husband.

“You have no fear of God. Why did you not tell me sooner, I should at least have had a glimpse of Doubrovsky. But now I shall have to wait long enough before I get a chance of seeing him again. Shameless creature that you are!”

The Frenchman stood as if petrified. The agreement with the officer, the money—everything seemed like a dream to him. But the bundle of bank notes was there in his pocket, eloquently confirming the reality of the wonderful adventure.

He resolved to hire horses to take him to the next town. The postilion drove him very slowly, and he reached the town at nightfall.

On approaching the barrier, where, in place of a sentinel, stood a dilapidated sentry-box, the Frenchman told the postilion to stop, got out of the *britchka* and proceeded on foot, explaining by signs to the driver that he might keep the vehicle and the portmanteau and buy brandy with them. The driver was as much astonished at his generosity as the Frenchman himself had been by Doubrovsky’s proposal. But concluding that the “German” [\[2\]](#) had taken leave of his senses, the driver thanked him with a very profound bow, and not caring about entering the town, he made his way to a house of entertainment that was well known to him, and the proprietor of which was a friend of his. There he passed the whole night, and the next morning he started back on his return journey with the *troika*, without the *britchka* and without the portmanteau, but with a swollen face and red eyes.

Doubrovsky, having possession of the Frenchman’s papers, boldly appeared, as we have already seen, at the house of Troekoureff, and there established himself. Whatever, were his secret intentions—we shall know them later on—there was nothing in his behaviour to excite suspicion. It is true that he did not occupy himself very much with the education of little Sasha, to whom he

allowed full liberty, nor was he very exacting in the matter of his lessons, which were only given for form's sake, but he paid great attention to the musical studies of his fair pupil, and frequently sat for hours beside her at the piano.

Everybody liked the young tutor: Kirila Petrovitch for his boldness and dexterity in the hunting-field; Maria Kirilovna for his unbounded zeal and slavish attentiveness; Sasha for his tolerance, and the members of the household for his kindness and generosity, apparently incompatible with his means. He himself seemed to be attached to the whole family, and already regarded himself as a member of it.

About a month had elapsed from the time of his entering upon the calling of tutor to the date of the memorable fête, and nobody suspected that the modest young Frenchman was in reality the terrible brigand whose name was a source of terror to all the landed proprietors of the neighbourhood. During all this time, Doubrovsky had never quitted Pokrovskoe, but the reports of his depredations did not cease for all that, thanks to the inventive imagination of the country people. It is possible, too, that his band may have continued their exploits during the absence of the chief.

Passing the night in the same room with a man whom he could only regard as a personal enemy, and one of the principal authors of his misfortune, Doubrovsky had not been able to resist temptation. He knew of the existence of the pouch, and had resolved to take possession of it.

We have seen how he frightened poor Anton Pafnoutitch by his unexpected transformation from a tutor into a brigand.

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[1]A kind of open four-wheeled carriage, with a top and shutters to close at pleasure.

[2]A general name for all foreigners in Russia.

## CHAPTER XII.

At nine o'clock in the morning, the guests who had passed the night at Pokrovskoe repaired one after the other to the sitting-room, where the tea-urn was already boiling, and before which sat Maria Kirilovna in a morning gown, and Kirila Petrovitch in a frieze coat and slippers, drinking his tea out of a large cup like a wash-hand basin.

The last to appear was Anton Pafnoutitch; he was so pale, and seemed so troubled, that everybody was struck by his appearance, and Kirila Petrovitch inquired after his health. Spitsin replied in an evasive manner, glaring with horror at the tutor, who sat there as if nothing had happened. A few minutes afterwards a servant entered and announced to Spitsin that his carriage was ready. Anton Pafnoutitch hastened to take his leave of the company, and then hurried out of the room and started off immediately. The guests and the host could not understand what had happened to him, and Kirila Petrovitch came to the conclusion that he was suffering from an attack of indigestion.

After tea and the farewell breakfast, the other guests began to take their leave, and soon Pokrovskoe became empty, and everything went on in the usual manner.

Several days passed, and nothing remarkable had happened. The life of the inhabitants of Pokrovskoe became very monotonous. Kirila Petrovitch went out hunting every day; while Maria Kirilovna devoted her time to reading, walking, and especially to musical exercises. She was beginning to understand her own heart, and acknowledged to herself with involuntary vexation that she was not indifferent to the good qualities of the young Frenchman. He, on his side, never overstepped the limits of respect and strict decorum, and thereby quieted her pride and her timid suspicions. With more and more confidence she gave herself up to the alluring habit of seeing him. She felt dull without Desforges, and in his presence she was constantly occupied with him, wishing to know his opinion of everything, and always agreeing with him. She was not yet in love with him perhaps; but at the first accidental obstacle or unexpected reverse of destiny, the flame of passion would burst forth within her heart.

One day, on entering the parlour, where the tutor awaited her, Maria Kirilovna observed with astonishment that he looked pale and troubled. She opened the piano and sang a few notes; but Doubrovsky, under the pretext of a headache, apologized, interrupted the lesson, closed the music, and slipped a note into her hand. Maria Kirilovna, without pausing to reflect, took it, and repented almost at the same moment for having done so. But Doubrovsky was no longer in the room. Maria Kirilovna went to her room, unfolded the note, and read as follows:

"Be in the arbour near the brook this evening, at seven o'clock: it is necessary that I should speak to you."



Her curiosity was strongly excited. She had long expected a declaration, desiring it and dreading it at one and the same time. It would have been agreeable to her to hear the confirmation of what she divined; but she felt that it would have been unbecoming to hear such a declaration from a man who, on account of his position, ought never to aspire to win her hand. She resolved to go to the meeting-place, but she hesitated about one thing: in what manner she ought to receive the tutor's declaration—with aristocratic indignation, with friendly admonition, with good-humoured banter, or with silent sympathy. In the meantime she kept constantly looking at the clock. It grew dark: candles were brought in. Kirila Petrovitch sat down to play at "Boston"<sup>[1]</sup> with some of his neighbours who had come to pay him a visit. The clock struck a quarter to seven, and Maria Kirilovna walked quietly out on to the steps, looked round on every side, and then hastened into the garden.

The night was dark, the sky was covered with clouds, and it was impossible to see anything at a distance of two paces; but Maria Kirilovna went forward in the darkness along paths that were quite familiar to her, and in a few minutes she reached the arbour. There she paused in order to draw breath and to present herself before Desforges with an air of calm indifference. But Desforges already stood before her.

"I thank you," he said in a low, sad voice, "for having granted my request. I should have been in despair if you had not complied with it."

Maria Kirilovna answered him in the words she had prepared beforehand.

"I hope you will not cause me to repent of my condescension."

He was silent, and seemed to be collecting himself.

"Circumstances demand—I am obliged to leave you," he said at last. "It may be that you will soon hear—but before going away, I must have an explanation with you."

Maria Kirilovna made no reply. In these words she saw the preface to the expected declaration.

"I am not what you suppose," continued he, lowering his head: "I am not the Frenchman Desforges—I am Doubrovsky."

Maria Kirilovna uttered a cry.

"Do not be alarmed, for God's sake! You need not be afraid of my name. Yes, I am that unhappy person, whom your father, after depriving him of his last crust of bread, drove out of his paternal home and sent on to the highway to rob. But you need not be afraid, either on your own account or on his. All is over.... I have forgiven him; you have saved him. My first crime of blood was to have been accomplished upon him. I prowled round his house, determining where the fire

should burst out, where I should enter his bedroom, and how I should cut him off from all means of escape; at that moment you passed by me like a heavenly vision, and my heart was subdued. I understood that the house, in which you dwelt, was sacred; that not a single person, connected with you by the ties of blood, could lie beneath my curse. I looked upon vengeance as madness, and dismissed the thought of it from my mind. Whole days I wandered around the gardens of Pokrovskoe, in the hope of seeing your white robe in the distance. In your incautious walks I followed you, stealing from bush to bush, happy in the thought that for you there was no danger, where I was secretly present. At last an opportunity presented itself.... I established myself in your house. Those three weeks were for me days of happiness; the recollection of them will be the joy of my sad life.... To-day I received news which renders it impossible for me to remain here any longer. I part from you to-day—at this very moment.... But before doing so, I felt that it was necessary that I should reveal myself to you, so that you might not curse me nor despise me. Think sometimes of Doubrovsky. Know that he was born for another fate, that his soul was capable of loving you, that never— —”

Just then a loud whistle resounded, and Doubrovsky became silent. He seized her hand and pressed it to his burning lips. The whistle was repeated.

“Farewell,” said Doubrovsky: “they are calling me. A moment’s delay may destroy me.”

He moved away.... Maria Kirilovna stood motionless. Doubrovsky returned and once more took her by the hand.

“If misfortune should ever overtake you, and you are unable to obtain help or protection from anybody, will you promise to apply to me, to demand from me everything that may be necessary for your happiness? Will you promise not to reject my devotion?”

Maria Kirilovna wept silently. The whistle resounded for the third time.

“You will destroy me!” cried Doubrovsky: “but I will not leave you until you give me a reply. Do you promise me or not?”

“I promise!” murmured the poor girl.

Greatly agitated by her interview with Doubrovsky, Maria Kirilovna returned from the garden. As she approached the house, she perceived a great crowd of people in the courtyard; a *troika* was standing in front of the steps, the servants were running hither and thither, and the whole house was in a commotion. In the distance she heard the voice of Kirila Petrovitch, and she hastened to reach her room, fearing that her absence might be noticed. Kirila Petrovitch met her in the hall. The visitors were pressing round our old acquaintance the sheriff, and were overwhelming him with questions. The sheriff, in travelling dress, and armed from head to foot, answered them with a mysterious and anxious air.

"Where have you been, Masha?" asked Kirila Petrovitch. "Have you seen Monsieur Desforages?"

Masha could scarcely answer in the negative.

"Just imagine," continued Kirila Petrovitch: "the sheriff has come to arrest him, and assures me that he is Doubrovsky."

"He answers the description in every respect, Your Excellency," said the sheriff respectfully.

"Oh! brother," interrupted Kirila Petrovitch, "go to—you know where—with your descriptions. I will not surrender my Frenchman to you until I have investigated the matter myself. How can anyone believe the word of Anton Pafnoutitch, a coward and a clown? He must have dreamt that the tutor wanted to rob him. Why didn't he tell me about it the next morning? He never said a word about the matter.

"The Frenchman threatened him, Your Excellency," replied the sheriff, "and made him swear that he would preserve silence."

"A pack of lies!" exclaimed Kirila Petrovitch: "I will have this mystery cleared up immediately. Where is the tutor?" he asked of a servant who entered at that moment.

"He cannot be found anywhere," replied the servant.

"Then search for him!" cried Troekouroff, beginning to entertain doubts.

"Show me your vaunted description," said he to the sheriff, who immediately handed him the paper.

"Hm! hm! twenty-three years old, etc., etc. That is so, but yet that does not prove anything. Well, what about the tutor?"

"He is not to be found," was again the answer.

Kirila Petrovitch began to be uneasy; Maria Kirilovna was neither dead nor alive.

"You are pale, Masha," remarked her father to her; "have they frightened you?"

"No, papa," replied Masha; "I have a headache."

"Go to your own room, Masha, and don't be alarmed."

Masha kissed his hand and retired hastily to her room. There she threw herself upon her bed and burst into a hysterical flood of tears. The maids hastened to her assistance, undressed her with difficulty, and with difficulty succeeded in calming her by means of cold water and all possible kinds of smelling salts. They put her to bed and she fell into a slumber.

In the meantime the Frenchman could not be found. Kirila Petrovitch paced up and down the room, loudly whistling his favourite military air. The visitors whispered among themselves; the sheriff looked foolish; the Frenchman was not to be found. Probably he had managed to escape through being warned beforehand. But by whom and how? That remained a mystery.

It was eleven o'clock, but nobody thought of sleep. At last Kirila Petrovitch said angrily to the sheriff:

"Well, do you wish to stop here till daylight? My house is not an inn. It is not by any cleverness on your part, brother, that Doubrovsky will be taken—if he really be Doubrovsky. Return home, and in future be a little quicker. And it is time for you to go home, too," he continued, addressing his guests. "Order the horses to be got ready. I want to go to bed."

In this ungracious manner did Troekouroff take leave of his guests.

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[\[1\]](#)A card game that was very popular on the Continent at the beginning of the present century.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

Some time elapsed without anything remarkable happening. But at the beginning of the following summer, many changes occurred in the family arrangements of Kirila Petrovitch.

About thirty versts from Pokrovskoe was the wealthy estate of Prince Vereisky. The Prince had lived abroad for a long time, and his estate was managed by a retired major. No intercourse existed between Pokrovskoe and Arbatova. But at the end of the month of May, the Prince returned from abroad and took up his abode in his own village, which he had never seen since he was born. Accustomed to social pleasures, he could not endure solitude, and the third day after his arrival, he set out to dine with Troekouroff, with whom he had formerly been acquainted. The Prince was about fifty years of age, but he looked much older. Excesses of every kind had ruined his health, and had placed upon him their indelible stamp. In spite of that, his appearance was agreeable and distinguished, and his having always been accustomed to society gave him a certain affability of demeanour, especially towards ladies. He had a constant need of amusement, and he was a constant victim to ennui.

Kirila Petrovitch was exceedingly gratified by this visit, which he regarded as a mark of respect from a man who knew the world. In accordance with his usual custom, he began to entertain his visitor by conducting him to inspect his establishments and kennels. But the Prince could hardly breathe in the atmosphere of the dogs, and he hurried out, holding a scented handkerchief to his nose. The old garden, with its clipped limes, square pond and regular walks, did not please him; he did not like the English gardens and the so-called natural style, but he praised them and went into ecstasies over everything. The servant came to announce that dinner was served, and they repaired to the dining-room. The Prince limped, being fatigued after his walk, and already repenting for having paid his visit.

But in the dining-hall Maria Kirilovna met them—and the old sensualist was struck by her beauty. Troekouroff placed his guest beside her. The Prince was resuscitated by her presence; he became quite cheerful, and succeeded several times in arresting her attention by the recital of some of his curious stories. After dinner Kirila Petrovitch proposed a ride on horseback, but the Prince excused himself, pointing to his velvet boots and joking about his gout. He proposed a drive in a carriage, so that he should not be separated from his charming neighbour. The carriage was got ready. The two old men and the beautiful young girl took their seats in it, and they started off. The conversation did not flag. Maria Kirilovna listened with pleasure to the flattering compliments and witty remarks of the man of the world, when suddenly Vereisky, turning to Kirila Petrovitch, said to him: "What is the meaning of that burnt building—does it belong to you?"

Kirila Petrovitch frowned: the memories awakened by the burnt manor-house were disagreeable to him. He replied that the land was his now, but that formerly it had belonged to Doubrovsky.

"To Doubrovsky?" repeated Vereisky. "What! to the famous brigand?"

"To his father," replied Troekouroff: "and the father himself was a true brigand."

"And what has become of our Rinaldo? Have they caught him? Is he still alive?"

"He is still alive and at liberty. By the way, Prince, Doubrovsky paid you a visit at Arbatova."

"Yes, last year, I think, he burnt or plundered something or other. Don't you think, Maria Kirilovna, that it would be very interesting to make a closer acquaintance with this romantic hero?"

"Interesting!" said Troekouroff: "she knows him already. He taught her music for three whole weeks, and thank God, took nothing for his lessons."

Then Kirila Petrovitch began to relate the story of the pretended French tutor. Maria Kirilovna felt as if she were sitting upon needles. Vereisky, listening with deep attention, found it all very strange, and changed the subject of conversation. On returning from the drive, he ordered his carriage to be brought, and in spite of the earnest requests of Kirila Petrovitch to stay for the night, he took his departure immediately after tea. Before setting out, however, he invited Kirila Petrovitch to pay him a visit and to bring Maria Kirilovna with him, and the proud Troekouroff promised to do so; for taking into consideration his princely dignity, his two stars, and the three thousand serfs belonging to his estate, he regarded Prince Vereisky in some degree as his equal.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

Two days after this visit, Kirila Petrovitch set out with his daughter for the abode of Prince Vereisky. On approaching Arbatova, he could not sufficiently admire the clean and cheerful-looking huts of the peasants, and the stone manor-house built in the style of an English castle. In front of the house stretched a close green lawn, upon which were grazing some Swiss cows tinkling their bells. A spacious park surrounded the house on every side. The master met the guests on the steps, and gave his arm to the young beauty. She was then conducted into a magnificent hall, where the table was laid for three. The Prince led his guests to a window, and a charming view opened out before them. The Volga flowed past the windows, and upon its bosom floated laden barges under full sail, and small fishing-boats known by the expressive name of "soul-destroyers." Beyond the river stretched hills and fields, and several little villages animated the landscape.

Then they proceeded to inspect the galleries of pictures bought by the Prince in foreign countries. The Prince explained to Maria Kirilovna their various characteristics, related the history of the painters, and pointed out their merits and defects. He did not speak of pictures in the pretentious language of the pedantic connoisseur, but with feeling and imagination. Maria Kirilovna listened to him with pleasure.

They sat down to table. Troekouroff rendered full justice to the wines of his Amphytrion, and to the skill of his cook; while Maria Kirilovna did not feel at all confused or constrained in her conversation with a man whom she now saw for the second time in her life. After dinner the host proposed to his guests that they should go into the garden. They drank coffee in the arbour on the bank of a broad lake studded with little islands. Suddenly resounded the music of wind instruments, and a six-oared boat drew up before the arbour. They rowed on the lake, round the islands, and visited some of them. On one they found a marble statue; on another, a lonely grotto; on a third, a monument with a mysterious inscription, which awakened within Maria Kirilovna a girlish curiosity not completely satisfied by the polite but reticent explanations of the Prince. The time passed imperceptibly. It began to grow dark. The Prince, under the pretext of the cold and the dew, hastened to return to the house, where the tea-urn awaited them. The Prince requested Maria Kirilovna to discharge the functions of hostess in his bachelor's home. She poured out the tea, listening to the inexhaustible stories of the charming talker. Suddenly a shot was heard, and a rocket illuminated the sky. The Prince gave Maria Kirilovna a shawl, and led her and Troekouroff on to the balcony. In front of the house, in the darkness, different coloured fires blazed up, whirled round, rose up in sheaves, poured out in fountains, fell in showers of rain and stars, went out and then burst into a blaze again. Maria Kirilovna was as delighted as a child. Prince Vereisky was delighted with her enjoyment, and Troekouroff was very well satisfied with him, for he accepted *tous les frais* of the Prince as signs of respect and a desire to please him.

The supper was quite equal to the dinner in every respect. Then the guests retired to the rooms assigned to them, and the next morning took leave of their amiable host, promising each other soon to meet again.

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## CHAPTER XV.

Aria Kirilovna was sitting in her room, embroidering at her frame before the open window. She did not entangle her threads like Conrad's mistress, who, in her amorous distraction, embroidered a rose with green silk. Under her needle, the canvas repeated unerringly the design of the original; but in spite of that, her thoughts did not follow her work—they were far away.

Suddenly an arm passed silently through the window, placed a letter upon the frame and disappeared before Maria Kirilovna could recover herself. At the same moment a servant entered to call her to Kirila Petrovitch. Trembling very much, she hid the letter under her fichu and hastened to her father in his study.

Kirila Petrovitch was not alone. Prince Vereisky was sitting in the room with him. On the appearance of Maria Kirilovna, the Prince rose and silently bowed, with a confusion that was quite unusual in him.

"Come here, Masha," said Kirila Petrovitch: "I have a piece of news to tell you which I hope will please you very much. Here is a sweetheart for you: the Prince proposes for your hand."

Masha was dumfounded; a deadly pallor overspread her countenance. She was silent. The Prince approached her, took her hand, and with a tender look, asked her if she would consent to make him happy. Masha remained silent.

"Consent? Of course she will consent," said Kirila Petrovitch; "but you know, Prince, it is difficult for a girl to say such a word as that. Well, children, kiss one another and be happy."

Masha stood motionless; the old Prince kissed her hand. Suddenly the tears began to stream down her pale cheeks. The Prince frowned slightly.

"Go, go, go!" said Kirila Petrovitch: "dry your tears and come back to us in a merry humour. They all weep at the moment of being betrothed," he continued, turning to Vereisky; "it is their custom. Now, Prince, let us talk about business, that is to say, about the dowry."

Maria Kirilovna eagerly took advantage of the permission to retire. She ran to her room, locked herself in and gave way to her tears, already imagining herself the wife of the old Prince. He had suddenly become repugnant and hateful to her. Marriage terrified her, like the block, like the grave.

"No, no," She repeated in, despair; "I would rather go into a convent, I would rather marry

Doubrovsky....”

Then she remembered the letter and eagerly began to read it, having a presentiment that it was from him. In fact, it was written by him, and contained only the following words:

“This evening, at ten o’clock, in the same place as before.”

The moon was shining; the night was calm; the wind rose now and then, and a gentle rustle ran over the garden.

Like a light shadow, the beautiful young girl drew near to the appointed meeting-place. Nobody was yet visible, when suddenly, from behind the arbour, Doubrovsky appeared before her.

“I know all,” he said to her in a low, sad voice; “remember your promise.”

“You offer me your protection,” replied Masha; “do not be angry—but the idea alarms me. In what way can you help me?”

“I can deliver you from a detested man....”

“For God’s sake, do not touch him, do not venture to touch him, if you love me. I do not wish to be the cause of any horror....”

“I will not touch him: your wish is sacred for me. He owes his life to you. Never shall a crime be committed in your name. You shall not be stigmatized on account of my misdeeds. But how can I save you from a cruel father?”

“There is still hope; I hope to touch him with my tears—my despair. He is obstinate, but he loves me very dearly.”

“Do not put your trust in a vain hope. In those tears he will see only the usual timidity and aversion common to all young girls, when they marry from motives of interest and not from affection. But if he takes it into his head to accomplish your happiness in spite of yourself? If you are conducted to the altar by force, in order that your destiny may be placed for ever in the hands of an old man?”

“Then—then there will be nothing else to do. Come for me—I will be your wife.”

Doubrovsky trembled; his pale face became covered with a deep flush, and the next minute he became paler than before. He remained silent for a long time, with his head bent down.

“Muster the full strength of your soul, implore your father, throw yourself at his feet; represent to him all the horror of the future that he is preparing for you, your youth fading away by the side of a feeble and dissipated old man. Tell him that riches will not procure for you a single moment of happiness. Luxury consoles poverty alone, and even in that case only for a brief season. Do not be put off by him, and do not be frightened either by his anger or by his threats, as long as there remains the least shadow of hope. For God’s sake do not leave off importuning him. If, however, you have no other resource left, decide upon a plain speaking explanation; tell him that if he remains inexorable, then—then you will find a terrible protector.”

Here Doubrovsky covered his face with his hands; he seemed to be choking. Masha wept.

“My miserable, miserable fate!” said he, with a bitter sigh. “For you I would have given my life. To see you from afar, to touch your hand was for me happiness beyond expression; and when there opens up before me the possibility of pressing you to my agitated heart, and saying to you: ‘I am yours for ever’—miserable creature that I am! I must fly from such happiness, I must repel it from me with all my strength. I dare not throw myself at your feet and thank Heaven for an incomprehensible, unmerited reward. Oh! how I ought to hate him who—but I feel that now there is no place in my heart for hatred.”

He gently passed his arm round her slender figure and pressed her tenderly to his heart. She confidently leaned her head upon the young brigand’s shoulder and both remained silent.... The time flew past.

“It is time,” said Masha at last.

Doubrovsky seemed as if awakening from a dream. He took her hand and placed a ring on her finger.

“If you decide upon having recourse to me,” said he, “then bring the ring here and place it in the hollow of this oak. I shall know what to do.”

Doubrovsky kissed her hand and disappeared among the trees.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

Prince Vereisky's intention of getting married was no longer a secret in the neighbourhood. Kirila Petrovitch received the congratulations of his acquaintances, and preparations were made for the wedding. Masha postponed from day to day the decisive explanation. In the meantime her manner towards her elderly lover was cold and constrained. The Prince did not trouble himself about that; the question of love gave him no concern; her silent consent was quite sufficient for him.

But the time went past. Masha at last decided to act, and wrote a letter to Prince Vereisky. She tried to awaken within his heart a feeling of magnanimity, candidly confessing that she had not the least attachment for him, and entreating him to renounce her hand and even to protect her from the tyranny of her father. She furtively delivered the letter to Prince Vereisky. The latter read it alone, but was not in the least moved by the candour of his betrothed. On the contrary, he perceived the necessity of hastening the marriage, and therefore he showed the letter to his future father-in-law.

Kirila Petrovitch was furious, and it was with difficulty that the Prince succeeded in persuading him not to let Masha see that he was acquainted with the contents of the letter. Kirila Petrovitch promised not to speak about the matter to her, but he resolved to lose no time and fixed the wedding for the next day. The Prince found this very reasonable, and he went to his betrothed and told her that her letter had grieved him very much, but that he hoped in time to gain her affection; that the thought of resigning her was too much for him to bear, and that he had not the strength to consent to his own sentence of death. Then he kissed her hand respectfully and took his departure, without saying a word to her about Kirila Petrovitch's decision.

But scarcely had he left the house, when her father entered and peremptorily ordered her to be ready for the next day. Maria Kirilovna, already agitated by the interview with Prince Vereisky, burst into tears and threw herself at her father's feet.

"Papa!" she cried in a plaintive voice, "papa! do not destroy me. I do not love the Prince, I do not wish to be his wife."

"What does this mean?" said Kirila Petrovitch, fiercely. "Up till the present you have kept silent and consented, and now, when everything is decided upon, you become capricious and refuse to accept him. Don't act the fool; you will gain nothing from me by so doing."

"Do not destroy me!" repeated poor Masha. "Why are you sending me away from you and giving me to a man that I do not love? Do I weary you? I want to stay with you as before. Papa, you will be sad without me, and sadder still when you know that I am unhappy. Papa, do not force me: I

do not wish to marry.”

Kirila Petrovitch was touched, but he concealed his emotion, and pushing her away from him, said harshly:

“That is all nonsense, do you hear? I know better than you what is necessary for your happiness. Tears will not help you. The day after to-morrow your wedding will take place.

“The day after to-morrow!” exclaimed Masha. “My God! No, no, impossible; it cannot be! Papa, hear me: if you have resolved to destroy me, then I will find a protector that you do not dream of. You will see, and then you will regret having driven me to despair.”

“What? What?” said Troekouroff. “Threats! threats to me? Insolent girl! Do you know that I will do with you what you little imagine. You dare to frighten me, you worthless girl! We will see who this protector will be.”

“Vladimir Doubrovsky,” replied Masha, in despair.

Kirila Petrovitch thought that she had gone out of her mind, and looked at her in astonishment.

“Very well!” said he to her, after an interval of silence; “expect whom you please to deliver you, but, in the meantime, remain in this room—you shall not leave it till the very moment of the wedding.”

With these words Kirila Petrovitch went out, locking the door behind him.

For a long time the poor girl wept, imagining all that awaited her. But the stormy interview had lightened her soul, and she could more calmly consider the question of her future and what it behoved her to do. The principal thing was—to free herself from this odious marriage. The lot of a brigand’s wife seemed paradise to her in comparison with the fate prepared for her. She glanced at the ring given to her by Doubrovsky. Ardently did she long to see him alone once more before the decisive moment, so that she might concert measures with him. A presentiment told her that in the evening she would find Doubrovsky in the garden, near the arbour; she resolved to go and wait for him there.

As soon as it began to grow dark, Masha prepared to carry out her intention, but the door of her room was locked. Her maid told her from the other side of the door, that Kirila Petrovitch had given orders that she was not to be let out. She was under arrest. Deeply hurt, she sat down by the window and remained there till late in the night, without undressing, gazing fixedly at the dark sky. Towards dawn she began to doze; but her light sleep was disturbed by sad visions, and she was soon awakened by the rays of the rising sun.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

She awoke, and all the horror of her position rose up in her mind. She rang. The maid entered, and in answer to her questions, replied that Kirila Petrovitch had set out the evening before for Arbatova, and had returned very late; that he had given strict orders that she was not to be allowed out of her room and that nobody was to be permitted to speak to her; that otherwise, there were no signs of any particular preparations for the wedding, except that the pope had been ordered not to leave the village under any pretext whatever. After disburdening herself of this news, the maid left Maria Kirilovna and again locked the door.

Her words hardened the young prisoner. Her head burned, her blood boiled. She resolved to inform Doubrovsky of everything, and she began to think of some means by which she could get the ring conveyed to the hole in the sacred oak. At that moment a stone struck against her window; the glass rattled, and Maria Kirilovna, looking out into the courtyard, saw the little Sasha making signs to her. She knew that he was attached to her, and she was pleased to see him.

“Good morning, Sasha; why do you call me?”

“I came, sister, to know if you wanted anything. Papa is angry, and has forbidden the whole house to obey you; but order me to do whatever you like, and I will do it for you.”

“Thank you, my dear Sasha. Listen; you know the old hollow oak near the arbour?”

“Yes, I know it, sister.”

“Then, if you love me, run there as quickly as you can and put this ring in the hollow; but take care that nobody sees you.”

With these words, she threw the ring to him and closed the window.

The lad picked up the ring, and ran off with all his might, and in three minutes he arrived at the sacred tree. There he paused, quite out of breath, and after looking round on every side, placed the ring in the hollow. Having successfully accomplished his mission, he wanted to inform Maria Kirilovna of the fact at once, when suddenly a red-haired ragged boy darted out from behind the arbour, dashed towards the oak and thrust his hand into the hole. Sasha, quicker than a squirrel, threw himself upon him and seized him with both hands.

“What are you doing here?” said he sternly.

“What business is that of yours?” said the boy, trying to disengage himself.

“Leave that ring alone, red head,” cried Sasha, “or I will teach you a lesson in my own style.”

Instead of replying, the boy gave him a blow in the face with his fist; but Sasha still held him firmly in his grasp, and cried out at the top of his voice:

“Thieves! thieves! help! help!”

The boy tried to get away from him. He seemed to be about two years older than Sasha, and very much stronger; but Sasha was more agile. They struggled together for some minutes; at last the red-headed boy gained the advantage. He threw Sasha upon the ground and seized him by the throat. But at that moment a strong hand grasped hold of his shaggy red hair, and Stepan, the gardener, lifted him half a yard from the ground.

“Ah! you red-headed beast!” said the gardener. “How dare you strike the young gentleman?”

In the meantime, Sasha had jumped to his feet and recovered himself.

“You caught me under the arm-pits,” said he, “or you would never have thrown me. Give me the ring at once and be off.”

“It’s likely!” replied the red-headed one, and suddenly twisting himself round, he disengaged his bristles from Stepan’s hand.

Then he started off running, but Sasha overtook him, gave him a blow in the back, and the boy fell. The gardener again seized him and bound him with his belt.

“Give me the ring!” cried Sasha.

“Wait a moment, young master,” said Stepan; “we will lead him to the bailiff to be questioned.”.

The gardener led the captive into the courtyard of the manor-house, accompanied by Sasha, who glanced uneasily at his trousers, torn and stained with the grass. Suddenly all three found themselves face to face with Kirila Petrovitch, who was going to inspect his stables.

“What is the meaning of this?” he said to Stepan.

Stepan in a few words related all that had happened.

Kirila Petrovitch listened to him with attention.

"You rascal," said he, turning to Sasha: "why did you wrestle with him?"

"He stole a ring out of the hollow tree, papa; make him give up the ring."

"What ring? Out of what hollow tree?"

"The one that Maria Kirilovna ... the ring...." Sasha stammered and became confused. Kirila Petrovitch frowned and said, shaking his head:

"Ah! Maria Kirilovna is mixed up in this. Confess everything, or I will give you such a birching as you have never had in your life."

"As true as heaven, papa, I ... papa ... Maria Kirilovna never told me to do anything, papa."

"Stepan, go and cut me some fine, fresh birch twigs."

"Stop, papa, I will tell you all. I was running about the courtyard to-day, when sister Maria Kirilovna opened the window. I ran towards her, and she accidentally dropped a ring, and I went and hid it in the hollow tree, and ... and this red-headed fellow wanted to steal the ring."

"She did not drop it accidentally,—you wanted to hide it ... Stepan, go and get the birch twigs."

"Papa, wait, I will tell you everything. Sister Maria Kirilovna told me to run to the oak tree and put the ring in the hollow; I ran and did so, but this nasty fellow——"

Kirila Petrovitch turned to the "nasty fellow" and said to him sternly:

"To whom do you belong?"

"I belong to my master Doubrovsky."

Kirila Petrovitch's face grew dark.

"It seems, then, that you do not recognize me as your master. Very well. What were you doing in my garden?"

"I was stealing raspberries."

"Ah, ah! the servant is like his master. As the pope is, so is his parish. And do my raspberries grow upon oak trees? Have you ever heard so?"



The boy did not reply.

"Papa, make him give up the ring," said Sasha.

"Silence, Alexander!" replied Kirila Petrovitch; "don't forget that I intend to settle with you presently. Go to your room. And you, squint-eyes, you seem to me to be a knowing sort of lad; if you confess everything to me, I will not whip you, but will give you a five copeck piece to buy nuts with. Give up the ring and go."

The boy opened his fist and showed that there was nothing in his hand.

"If you don't, I shall do something to you that you little expect. Now!"

The boy did not answer a word, but stood with his head bent down, looking like a perfect simpleton.

"Very well!" said Kirila Petrovitch: "lock him up somewhere, and see that he does not escape, or I'll skin the whole household."

Stepan conducted the boy to the pigeon loft, locked him in there, and ordered the old poultry woman, Agatha, to keep a watch upon him.

"There is no doubt about it: she has kept up intercourse with that accursed Doubrovsky. But if she has really invoked his aid——" thought Kirila Petrovitch, pacing up and down the room, and angrily whistling his favourite air,——"I am hot upon his track, at all events, and he shall not escape me. We shall take advantage of this opportunity.... Hark! a bell; thank God, that is the sheriff. Bring here the boy that is locked up."

In the meantime, a small *telega* drove into the courtyard, and our old acquaintance, the sheriff, entered the room, all covered with dust.

"Glorious news!" said Kirila Petrovitch: "I have caught Doubrovsky."

"Thank God, Your Excellency!" said the sheriff, his face beaming with delight. "Where is he?"

"That is to say, not Doubrovsky himself, but one of his band. He will be here presently. He will help us to apprehend his chief. Here he is."

The sheriff, who expected to see some fierce-looking brigand, was astonished to perceive a lad of thirteen years of age, of somewhat delicate appearance. He turned to Kirila Petrovitch with an incredulous look, and awaited an explanation. Kirila Petrovitch then began to relate the events of

the morning, without, however, mentioning the name of Maria Kirilovna.

The sheriff listened to him attentively, glancing from time to time at the young rogue, who, assuming a look of imbecility, seemed to be paying no attention to all that was going on around him.

“Will Your Excellency allow me to speak to you apart?” said the sheriff at last.

Kirila Petrovitch conducted him into the next room and locked the door after him.

Half an hour afterwards they returned to the hall, where the captive was awaiting the decision respecting his fate.

“The master wished,” said the sheriff to him, “to have you locked up in the town gaol, to be whipped, and then to be sent to the convict settlement; but I interceded for you and have obtained your pardon. Untie him!”

The lad was unbound.

“Thank the master,” said the sheriff.

The lad went up to Kirila Petrovitch and kissed his hand.

“Run away home,” said Kirila Petrovitch to him, “and in future do not steal raspberries from oak trees.”

The lad went out, ran merrily down the steps, and without looking behind him, dashed off across the fields in the direction of Kistenevka. On reaching the village, he stopped at a half-ruined hut, the first from the corner, and tapped at the window. The window was opened, and an old woman appeared.

“Grandmother, some bread!” said the boy: “I have eaten nothing since this morning; I am dying of hunger.”

“Ah! it is you, Mitia;[\[1\]](#) but where have you been all this time, you little devil?” asked the old woman.

“I will tell you afterwards, grandmother. For God’s sake, some bread!”

“Come into the hut, then.”

"I haven't the time, grandmother; I've got to run on to another place. Bread, for the Lord's sake, bread!"

"What a fidget!" grumbled the old woman: "there's a piece for you," and she pushed through the window a slice of black bread.

The boy bit it with avidity, and then continued his course, eating it as he went.

It was beginning to grow dark. Mitia made his way along by the corn kilns and kitchen gardens into the Kistenevka wood. On arriving at the two pine trees, standing like advanced guards before the wood, he paused, looked round on every side, gave a shrill, abrupt whistle, and then listened. A light and prolonged whistle was heard in reply, and somebody came out of the wood and advanced towards him.

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[\[1\]](#)Diminutive of Dimitry (Demetrius).

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

Kirila Petrovitch was pacing up and down the hall, whistling his favourite air louder than usual. The whole house was in a commotion; the servants were running about, and the maids were busy. In the courtyard there was a crowd of people. In Maria Kirilovna's dressing-room, before the looking-glass, a lady, surrounded by maidservants, was attiring the pale, motionless young bride. Her head bent languidly beneath the weight of her diamonds; she started slightly when a careless hand pricked her, but she remained silent, gazing absently into the mirror.

"Aren't you nearly finished?" said the voice of Kirila Petrovitch at the door.

"In a minute!" replied the lady. "Maria Kirilovna, get up and look at yourself. Is everything right?"

Maria Kirilovna rose, but made no reply. The door was opened.

"The bride is ready," said the lady to Kirila Petrovitch; "order the carriage."

"With God!" replied Kirila Petrovitch, and taking a sacred image from the table, "Approach, Masha," said he, in a voice of emotion; "I bless you...."

The poor girl fell at his feet and began to sob.

"Papa ... papa ..." she said through her tears, and then her voice failed her.

Kirila Petrovitch hastened to give her his blessing. She was raised up and almost carried into the carriage. Her godmother and one of the maidservants got in with her, and they drove off to the church. There the bridegroom was already waiting for them. He came forward to meet the bride, and was struck by her pallor and her strange look. They entered the cold deserted church together, and the door was locked behind them. The priest came out from the altar, and the ceremony at once began.

Maria Kirilovna saw nothing, heard nothing; she had been thinking of but one thing the whole morning: she expected Doubrovsky; nor did her hope abandon her for one moment. But when the priest turned to her with the usual question, she started and felt faint; but still she hesitated, still she expected. The priest, without waiting for her reply, pronounced the irrevocable words.

The ceremony was over. She felt the cold kiss of her hated husband; she heard the flattering congratulations of those present; and yet she could not believe that her life was bound for ever, that Doubrovsky had not arrived to deliver her. The Prince turned to her with tender words—she

did not understand them. They left the church; in the porch was a crowd of peasants from Pokrovskoe. Her glance rapidly scanned them, and again she exhibited her former insensibility. The newly-married couple seated themselves in the carriage and drove off to Arbatova, whither Kirila Petrovitch had already gone on before, in order to welcome the wedded pair there.

Alone with his young wife, the Prince was not in the least piqued by her cold manner. He did not begin to weary her with amorous protestations and ridiculous enthusiasm; his words were simple and required no answer. In this way they travelled about ten versts. The horses dashed rapidly along the uneven country roads, and the carriage scarcely shook upon its English springs. Suddenly were heard cries of pursuit. The carriage stopped, and a crowd of armed men surrounded it. A man in a half-mask opened the door on the side where the young Princess sat, and said to her:

“You are free! Alight.”

“What does this mean?” cried the Prince. “Who are you that— —”

“It is Doubrovsky,” replied the Princess.

The Prince, without losing his presence of mind, drew from his side pocket a travelling pistol and fired at the masked brigand. The Princess shrieked, and, filled with horror, covered her face with both her hands. Doubrovsky was wounded in the shoulder; the blood was flowing. The Prince, without losing a moment, drew another pistol; but he was not allowed time to fire; the door was opened, and several strong arms dragged him out of the carriage and snatched the pistol from him. Above him flashed several knives.

“Do not touch him!” cried Doubrovsky, and his terrible associates drew back.

“You are free!” continued Doubrovsky, turning to the pale Princess.

“No!” replied she; “it is too late! I am married. I am the wife of Prince Vereisky.”

“What do you say?” cried Doubrovsky in despair. “No! you are not his wife. You were forced, you could never have consented.”

“I have consented, I have taken the oath,” she answered with firmness. “The Prince is my husband; give orders for him to be set at liberty, and leave me with him. I have not deceived you. I waited for you till the last moment ... but now, I tell you, now, it is too late. Let us go.”

But Doubrovsky no longer heard her. The pain of his wound, and the violent emotion of his mind had deprived him of all power over himself. He fell against the wheel; the brigands surrounded him. He managed to say a few words to them. They placed him on horseback; two of them held

him up, a third took the horse by the bridle, and all withdrew from the spot, leaving the carriage in the middle of the road, the servants bound, the horses unharnessed, but without carrying anything away with them, and without shedding one drop of blood in revenge for the blood of their chief.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

In the middle of a dense wood, on a narrow grass-plot, rose a small earthwork, consisting of a rampart and ditch, behind which were some huts and tents. Within the inclosed space, a crowd of persons who, by their varied garments and by their arms, could at once be recognized as brigands, were having their dinner, seated bareheaded around a large cauldron. On the rampart, by the side of a small cannon, sat a sentinel, with his legs crossed under him. He was sewing a patch upon a certain part of his attire, handling his needle with a dexterity that bespoke the experienced tailor, and every now and then raising his head and glancing round on every side.

Although a certain ladle had passed from hand to hand several times, a strange silence reigned among this crowd. The brigands finished their dinner; one after another rose and said a prayer to God; some dispersed among the huts, others strolled away into the wood or lay down to sleep, according to the Russian habit.

The sentinel finished his work, shook his garment, gazed admiringly at the patch, stuck the needle in his sleeve, sat astride the cannon, and began to sing a melancholy old song with all the power of his lungs.

At that moment the door of one of the huts opened, and an old woman in a white cap, neatly and even pretentiously dressed, appeared upon the threshold.

"Enough of that, Stepka," [\[1\]](#) said she angrily. "The master is sleeping, and yet you must make that frightful noise; you have neither conscience nor pity."

"I beg pardon, Petrovna," replied Stepka. "I won't do it any more. Let our little father sleep on and get well."

The old woman withdrew into the hut, and Stepka began to pace to and fro upon the rampart.

Within the hut, from which the old woman had emerged, lay the wounded Doubrovsky upon a cold bed behind a partition. Before him, upon a small table, lay his pistols, and a sword hung near his head. The mud hut was hung round and covered with rich carpets. In the corner was a lady's silver toilet and mirror. Doubrovsky held in his hand an open book, but his eyes were closed, and the old woman, peeping at him from behind the partition, could not tell whether he was asleep or only thinking.

Suddenly Doubrovsky started. In the fort there was a great commotion, and Stepka came and thrust his head in through the window of the hut.

“Father Vladimir Andreivitch!” he cried; “our men are signalling—they are on our track!”

Doubrovsky leaped from his bed, seized his arms and issued from the hut. The brigands were noisily crowding together in the inclosure, but on the appearance of their chief a deep silence reigned.

“Are all here?” asked Doubrovsky.

“All except the patrols,” was the reply.

“To your places!” cried Doubrovsky, and the brigands took up each his appointed place.

At that moment, three of the patrols ran up to the gate of the fort. Doubrovsky went to meet them.

“What is it?” he asked.

“The soldiers are in the wood,” was the reply; “they are surrounding us.”

Doubrovsky ordered the gate to be locked, and then went himself to examine the cannon. In the wood could be heard the sound of many voices, every moment drawing nearer and nearer. The brigands waited in silence. Suddenly three or four soldiers appeared from the wood, but immediately fell back again, firing their guns as a signal to their comrades.

“Prepare for battle!” cried Doubrovsky. There was a movement among the brigands, then all was silent again.

Then was heard the noise of an approaching column; arms glittered among the trees, and about a hundred and fifty soldiers dashed out of the wood and rushed with a wild shout towards the rampart. Doubrovsky applied the match to the cannon; the shot was successful—one soldier had his head shot off, and two others were wounded. The troops were thrown into confusion, but the officer in command rushed forward, the soldiers followed him and jumped down into the ditch. The brigands fired down at them with muskets and pistols, and then, with axes in their hands, they began to defend the rampart, up which the infuriated soldiers were now climbing, leaving twenty of their comrades wounded in the ditch below. A hand to hand struggle began. The soldiers were already upon the rampart, the brigands were beginning to give way; but Doubrovsky advanced towards the officer in command, presented his pistol at his breast, and fired. The officer fell backwards to the ground. Several soldiers raised him in their arms and hastened to carry him into the wood; the others, having lost their chief, stopped fighting. The emboldened brigands took advantage of this moment of hesitation, and surging forward, hurled their assailants back into the ditch. The besiegers began to run; the brigands with fierce yells started in pursuit of them. The victory was decisive. Doubrovsky, trusting to the complete



confusion of the enemy, stopped his followers and shut himself up in the fortress, doubled the sentinels, forbade anyone to absent himself, and ordered the wounded to be collected.

This last event drew the serious attention of the government to the daring exploits of Doubrovsky. Information was obtained of his place of retreat, and a detachment of soldiers was sent to take him, dead or alive. Several of his band were captured, and from these it was ascertained that Doubrovsky was no longer among them. A few days after the battle that we have just described, he collected all his followers and informed them that it was his intention to leave them for ever, and advised them to change their mode of life:

“You have become rich under my command. Each of you has a passport with which he will be able to make his way safely to some distant province, where he can pass the rest of his life in ease and honest labour. But you are all rascals, and probably do not wish to abandon your trade.”

After this speech he left them, taking with him only one of his followers. Nobody knew what became of him. At first the truth of this testimony was doubted, for the devotion of the brigands to their chief was well known, and it was supposed that they had concocted the story to secure his safety; but after events confirmed their statement. The terrible visits, burnings, and robberies ceased; the roads again became safe. According to another report, Doubrovsky had fled to some foreign country.

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[\[1\]](#)Diminutive of Stepan (Stephen).